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NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

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By

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WITHDRAWN

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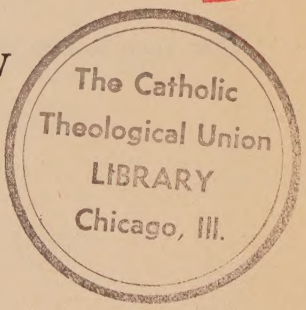

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NEW SERIES OF HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY I

BRETHREN: To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed. He saith not: And to his seeds, as of many: but as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God: the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not annul, to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why, then, was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom He made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. —EPISTLE, *Gal.* iii. 16-22.

FIRST of all I must remark that these six verses of to-day's Epistle, which I have just read for you, are somewhat difficult to understand, and you yourselves will have perceived this on hearing them. There are many reasons why this passage is difficult and obscure. First, he is treating

of the relations between the old Mosaic Law and the Law of the Gospel, and insisting on the superiority of the latter over the former, a truth that was then very seriously questioned. Next, in passing he makes allusion to certain oracles of the Old Testament, which to us are very obscure, and with a conciseness wholly characteristic of him deduces from them consequences of the highest importance. Finally, his manner of expressing himself and his reasoning are so rapid and compressed, and the turn of his sentences so involved and rugged, that it is really difficult to follow him and get at his meaning. But if you will be good enough to give me your attention and listen to what I have to say I feel confident that I can make the teaching of the Apostle clear to you, and you will find that it will be amply worth your while to do so. May God grant me the grace to make my explanation simple and clear, and grant you also the grace to receive what I say with open and docile minds.

The Letter of St. Paul to the Galatians may be divided into three parts: In the first part he defends himself against those who accuse him of having altered or misunderstood the Gospel, and then he goes on to prove that he is divinely sent to preach it; next, he sets forth the dogmatic teaching with regard to justification; finally, he inculcates some practical moral truths.

The part I am about to explain to you belongs to the second or the dogmatic part and was of the greatest practical importance when the Apostle wrote his Letter. Here a short historical reference is necessary. Many of the Galatians, origi-

nally converted by St. Paul, had been led astray by teachers of error and were firmly persuaded that in order to be saved they must combine with the Christian teaching an observance of the Mosaic Law throughout its whole extent, but particularly an observance of the rite of circumcision. The Apostle sets himself to disabuse them of this very grave error, which confused the figures and the types with the object itself of which they were figures and types.[1] Among other arguments St. Paul reminds the Hebrews that Abraham was justified before God by the *faith* which he put in God's word, and not by the Law of Moses, which then did not exist and which was given a long time afterward; and that as Abra-

[1]Senator P. Negri of Milan, in his last work, entitled "The Meditations of a Vagabond," speaks of St. Paul as *the* great figure of Christianity, who, by rejecting the ceremonial Law and especially that of circumcision, separated the teachings of Christ from the Mosaic dispensation, and thus opened the way to the conversion of the Gentiles. It is true that St. Paul did insist, and more earnestly than any of the other apostles, on the abandonment of the Mosaic dispensation in all its ceremonial parts, and above all as regards circumcision, which was its seal; but it is clear that in this the other apostles agreed with him, although for certain prudential reasons they showed themselves less resolute than he. Moreover, Christ Himself announced that the Synagogue had come to an end, and He laid the foundation of the separation between His Law and that of Moses, stamping upon His Church certain marks so clearly that there could be no doubt about it, or of its absolute separation from its Hebrew stock. It was Jesus Christ who founded a new priesthood, who substituted Baptism for circumcision, who abrogated the sacrifice of the Law and established His own, who insisted that there must be a new birth interiorly, who proclaimed in opposition to the Synagogue, which was restricted to the Jewish nation alone, that His kingdom was universal. St. Paul was, without doubt, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and labored more than the other apostles to free the Church from the swaddling clothes of Judaism; but in this he was but the *executor* of the will of Christ, neither the inventor nor the creator of Christianity. The distinguished author will pardon us for saying that his thesis rests upon a false premise.

ham pleased God, not by observing the Law of Moses, but by faith, so his true sons were also justified by faith.

And here begins the passage I am to explain. "*To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed. He saith not: And to his seeds as of many, but as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ.*" The argument of St. Paul is this: Scripture teaches us that Abraham pleased God and sanctified himself when he believed God's word and obeyed it, leaving his native country. Then God made Abraham a solemn, absolute promise, saying to him: "*And in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice,*" that is, "they shall receive My grace, just as you have received it. Now when Abraham received grace there existed neither the Law of Moses nor circumcision; therefore he was not justified by virtue either of the Law of Moses or of circumcision, but by his *faith* and by obeying the voice of God. But God promised that all nations, all the Gentiles, should be justified as he had been justified; therefore, Galatians, faith and obedience to the divine will are necessary in order to please God, and not the observing of the Law of Moses." And St. Paul calls attention to the fact that the promise of justification was made, not alone to Abraham, but also to his *seed,* not *seeds,* because the reference was to Christ and to all those who by faith should become the sons of Christ.

The Apostle goes on arguing in this way: "*Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the Law which was made after four hun-*

dred and thirty years,[1] *doth not annul, so as to make void the promise.*" Which is equivalent to saying that the Law of Moses, given by God on Sinai, came four hundred and thirty years after the promise; now if the observing of this Law were necessary as a condition of becoming sons of God, God Himself would have annulled the promise or the covenant made with Abraham, in virtue of which the nations were to be blessed in the same way in which Abraham was blessed. If divine grace is to come to us in virtue of the Law of Moses, then it can not come according to the promise made to Abraham; but this grace was promised by God independently of the Law and before the Law existed, and the promise of God stands and must stand, just as a last will, to which it is not lawful to add, and from which it is not lawful to subtract a single syllable, stands and must stand. This is the subtile but valid argument of the Apostle.

And now allow me to make an observation which the subject suggests: In what has been said mention has been made of the justification of Abraham, and of the justification of his sons in spirit, through faith in Christ Jesus. What is justification? It is grace, it is an abiding force that penetrates the whole soul, transforms it, beautifies it, stamps it with the image of God, and gives it the right some day to see Him, to love Him as

[1]Interpreters are at a loss how to compute the 430 years of which St. Paul here speaks. It seems evident that these 430 years should be reckoned from the seventy-fifth year of Abraham to the giving of the Law on Sinai; the reckoning is exact. It is impossible to make the computation from the departure of Jacob and Joseph for Egypt.

He is, and to live of His life. Take a piece of iron; it is cold, its color is dark; cast it into a hot fire that incloses it on all sides; it becomes warm, red-hot, and luminous, and yet it does not cease to be iron; the same thing happens to the soul that is encompassed with the grace of God; it does not cease to be a soul, but it receives marvelous endowments and qualities; it becomes beautiful with the beauty of God, strong with His strength, and in consequence its acts acquire a supernatural worth. Such a soul is said to be justified, that is, just and upright in the sight of God, lovely with the loveliness with which He wishes it to be adorned, and therefore dear to Him and the object of His love. It participates of His own divine nature, as a flower participates of the beauty of the sun, which gives it its dazzling color and radiant beauty. This divine grace or justification can not be the fruit of our own works, nor a merit due to our efforts and strivings, any more than is the brilliancy of the flower, which the sun has adorned, due to its merits. It is a gift, wholly and purely a gift of God; our only merit is in giving it a welcome, and, having received it, we can and ought to increase it by our co-operation. This grace, the greatest of the gifts of God, we obtain through the merits of Jesus Christ, in whom and through whom alone, as St. Paul elsewhere writes, we are enriched with all spiritual gifts.

Let us return to the Apostle's words. He fancies the Galatians saying: "If the Law of Moses with all its prescriptions and with circumcision itself, does not reconcile us to God, does not sanctify us, of what good is it? Why was it given

to us? Of what account is this Law, which assuredly comes from God? *Why, then, was the Law?"* St. Paul at once replies in his concise way: "I tell you that the Law of Moses was an addition to the promises made to Abraham, because of the transgressions of the people of Israel, who, owing to their long sojourn in Egypt, had become so ignorant and so perverted that they frequently did wrong without adverting to it or being conscious of it. *The Law was set because of transgressions."* We will try if possible to make still clearer the mind of the Apostle.

Abraham was justified before God by observing His word, by trusting His promises, and by obeying His will; in the same way could and must all the descendants of Abraham be justified; it was sufficient for them to believe in the divine promises made to Abraham and to live accordingly. But what happened? His descendants grew to be very numerous in Egypt, they became a great people; little by little they forgot the promises made to Abraham; they fell frequently into idolatry and became guilty of enormous crimes. What did God do then? Seeing the evil inclinations of the people and their frequent and deplorable lapses, in His mercy He gave them the Law with all that heap of minute prescriptions with which it abounds: *"The Law was set because of transgressions."* This Law of fear was a powerful aid to keep the people in the way of truth and to keep living among them the memory of the divine promises. This Law, as the Apostle says a few verses farther on, was their leader or schoolmas-

ter, which was to lead them on to Christ and prepare them for His Gospel.[1]

The Mosaic Law, adds St. Paul, was promulgated by angels, through a mediator, namely, Moses. *"Being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."* From these words we learn that the Law was given on Sinai through angels, from whom Moses received it. He was, therefore, a mediator between God and the people: *"Ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."*

Possibly some one will object: We have always heard it said that Moses received the Law from the hands of God Himself, and how is it, then, that St. Paul tells us here that Moses received the Law from angels? There is no difficulty in this, my friends, for what God does through the angels, or through His ministers, is said to be done by Himself. Do we not say that God sanctifies the babe in Baptism, that He looses the sins of the adult, although Baptism is conferred by a minister and Penance is administered by a priest? Similarly, Holy Scripture tells us in one place that the Law was given us by God, and in another that it was given by the angels, and both statements are true. It is needless to repeat here, what I have said so often, that God in all His eternal works, even the most exalted, is accustomed to employ as instruments secondary causes, namely angels or men, the better to show forth His greatness and glory, to dignify creatures, to ennoble them, and to make them like to Himself, by making them causes. Let us, then, learn to honor and venerate those high spirits,

[1]Gal. iii. 25.

those angels, who stand between us and God, and who are the ordinary ministers of His will on earth.

And how long was the Law of Moses, given in aid of the promises made to Abraham, to endure? "*Until the seed should come to whom he made the promise.*" And who is this seed? It is needless to say, it is Christ, in whom the blessing promised to Abraham would have its fulfilment. Hence, when the child became a man the office of the schoolmaster ceased; and when Christ came the Law should cease and did cease.

St. Paul continuing says: "*Now a mediator is not of one, but God is one.*" This sentence certainly needs explanation and it may be explained in this way. God is one and the Father of all men; He wills that all men be saved, and His will is eternal and immutable; to the Hebrews, in addition to the promises, He gave the Law, to lead them on to salvation, and He gave it through Moses as through a mediator; for those who are not Hebrews He Himself provides by giving them Christ Himself as their head, and in Him bringing together or unifying the children of Abraham, who had a mediator in Moses, and the Gentiles, whom He called to Himself without the aid of Moses. In other words, as men were saved without the Law, before Moses, by faith in Christ to come, so now they are saved without the Law of Moses, provided they believe in Christ already come. The Law was a temporary aid given by God to the Hebrews alone.

The practical outcome of the teaching of the Apostle in the verses already quoted is in sub-

stance to establish this fundamental truth. The salvation of all men, whether Jew or Gentile, both before and after the coming of Christ, is to be sought in Him alone, in Christ the Saviour of all. His coming was in the midst of time; one part of the human family preceded His coming, the other part followed His coming, and will continue on to the end of time. The first part looked forward with faith in the divine promises to the coming of Christ; such were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and with faith, aided by the Mosaic Law; such were Moses, David, and all the prophets. The second part looks to Christ already come and unites itself with Him by faith, which works through charity. In this way Christ is the great center of all humanity, on Him are centered the eyes of the whole human race, all the yearnings and all the love of those who seek and wish to be saved.

Brothers and most dear children, Jesus Christ is the light of our minds, He is the strength of our wills, He is our life. We should all unite ourselves with Him, because only through Him can we have access to God, as St. Paul says elsewhere. But how can we so unite ourselves with Him that His life will become our life? In this way. The intellect and the will are the two powers through which the soul acts, grows, and expands; they belong to man and are characteristic of him. The intelligence is made for the possession of truth, as the eye is made to receive light; and the will necessarily tends to love, as the lungs tend to breathe. Now Jesus Christ is the author and consummator of our faith; by means of the Church He gives us faith, which is the light of our intellects, and He

offers us Himself as an object worthy of our love. Let us, then, fix our intellects on those truths, which come forth from Christ, as the rays of light emanate from the sun; let us keep our hearts turned toward Jesus, as a flower turns its calyx toward the sun, which gives it color and beauty; let us give our hearts wholly to Him, and our union with Him will be complete. When heart and mind are intimately united with Jesus Christ by faith and love, the body, the faithful executor of what is known and willed and loved, will follow. Thus, united mind and soul with Jesus Christ in time, we shall also be united with Him in eternity.

And now let us go on to the explanation of the last two verses of the Epistle. "*Was the Law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid.*" This is a fresh difficulty which St. Paul in His concise and nervous style puts to Himself. The Law of Moses, as has been already stated, did not of itself give grace, nor did it sanctify; grace and sanctification came solely from a firm faith in the divine promises; now it would seem that, since the Law was added to the divine promises, faith was not sufficient and that justification came through the Law. In other words, the addition of the Mosaic Law to the divine promises would seem to imply that the promises were of themselves insufficient, and that the Law was both necessary and sufficient. St. Paul exclaims, as if horrified at the thought: "*God forbid.*" If the Mosaic Law had had of itself the power to sanctify us, then indeed would it be true that the Law is contrary to the promises, because we should then be justified by the Law, and not by the promises and by faith in

them. It is therefore beyond all question that the Mosaic Law can not take the place of faith in the work of our justification, and that it was only a temporary aid or expedient given to the Hebrews to bring them to their senses and to preserve their faith until the coming of Christ, when there would be no more need of it.

The Apostle says finally: "*But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*" I do not deny, my friends, that the structure of this sentence and its peculiar phraseology make it difficult to get at its meaning. But this is the sense: "No, the Law of Moses is not contrary to the promises, by which men were justified by faith in Christ Jesus; rather it was an aid to the fulfilment of the promises." How so? Did the Law of Moses diminish the transgressions of the Hebrews or check their crimes? On the contrary, these increased immeasurably, and finally culminated in the putting of the Son of God to death; the Mosaic Law brought out into fullest light the feebleness of man, and made him realize the necessity of divine aid and the fact that only through faith in Jesus Christ could he be justified.

The teaching of the Apostle here calls to mind a similar doctrine drawn out by Him in the first three chapters of his Letter to the Romans and particularly in the third.[1] Here St. Paul shows in vigorous language that the Gentiles could not please God by reason and by their natural powers alone, nor could the Hebrews please Him by the Mosaic Law, that both the one and the other had

[1]Rom. iii. 19.

to confess their absolute inability to do anything toward their own justification and hence were forced to recognize that this could be accomplished only through Jesus Christ; that no one could glory in God's sight and that all must be subject to His judgment.[1] All alike, Gentiles and Hebrews, are sinners, and all alike, in order to please God and be saved, have need of faith in Christ Jesus. May this faith, which you all received in Baptism, which was nurtured and strengthened by the word of God and the grace of the sacraments, which is the root of all sanctification, and which works through charity, be ever living in your hearts and operative in works.[2]

HOMILY II

At that *time:* As He was going to Jerusalem, He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: And lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Whom when He saw, He said: Go show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went they were made

[1]Rom. iii. 19-30.

[2]I realize perfectly well that the text of the Apostle is obscure and that even after my explanation many points will not be sufficiently clear. I will try briefly and more clearly to draw out the meaning of the Apostle.

St. Paul wishes to demonstrate that the Mosaic Law of itself was not sufficient for salvation, that salvation came through faith in God and in Jesus Christ. How does he show this? In this way. Abraham was justified by believing in God and in His promises; these promises and this faith were anterior to the Law of Moses and to circumcision; therefore the Law of Moses and circumcision were of themselves not necessary, since man was

clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God, and he fell on his face, before His feet, giving thanks; and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger. And He said to him: Arise, go thy way: for thy faith hath made thee whole.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xvii. 11-19.

THE undeniable and far-famed miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, performed by Jesus at the very gate of Jerusalem, had thrown the Sanhedrim into a tumult of confusion. The chiefs of the Pharisees and of the people at once assembled in council under the presidency of Caiphas and passed a resolution to put Jesus to death. Jesus then left Jerusalem and Bethany and withdrew to Ephrem,[1] a small village on the confines of Judea. Shortly afterward He set out from Ephrem and, passing through Samaria, went into Galilee, and thence going down into the valley of the Jordan, He again took the road that leads to Jericho and Jerusalem. This was a few days before the last Pasch and before His death. It

justified without them through faith in the divine promises. The Law was given and circumcision prescribed. Why? Of what service were they? Because of the weakness and infidelity of Israel, they were given as an aid and as a means, and nothing more, to revive and keep alive faith in the divine promises. The Mosaic Law and circumcision did not in any way lessen the efficacy of faith in the divine promises. Christ, the term of the divine promises, had come. Away, then, with the Mosaic Law, away with circumcision, which were only an aid to keep our faith strong in the divine promises; the scaffolding is removed when the building is completed. This, it seems to me, is the best explanation of the words of the Apostle.

[1]John xi. 54.

was on this journey that the miracle recorded in to-day's Gospel took place. The text presents no difficulty, but contains many moral lessons of practical interest, well worthy of reverent attention.

A modern traveler tells us that on the way from Jaffa to Jerusalem he came upon a crowd of miserable people, without hair, or nose, or eyes, who stretched out toward him stumps of arms without hands, and who could not speak, only emitting a shrieking, guttural sound, which it was impossible to understand. They were lepers, who lived segregated, cut off from the ordinary habitations of men, in old abandoned huts. No one approached them or touched either themselves, their clothes, or anything they used. Those afflicted with leprosy, comparatively few in our day, even in the East, were at the time of Christ quite numerous. This terrible malady, then common in the East, passed into the West at the time of the Crusades, and became so prevalent that many hospitals were built especially for lepers. It has now almost disappeared in the West, but it still exists in the East and more particularly in Palestine, and there are some cases of it in other parts of the world. Its origin is due to a lack of cleanliness. Moses published most minute and stringent rules, which those afflicted with, or suspected of being afflicted with that frightful disease had to observe. It was the duty of the priest, who was also a physician, to examine those suspected of being affected with leprosy; and, if he found any doubtful cases, they had to be isolated until the doubt had disappeared. Those who were found to be free from

leprosy, were allowed their liberty, and those in whom the disease manifested itself were wholly separated from the society of their fellow-men. If one who had been afflicted with this disease recovered, which was rarely the case, he had to present himself to the priest, who, after satisfying himself that the man was cured, by virtue of his office as priest allowed him to return to the society of men. Moses may be considered the first legislator who prescribed that those afflicted with contagious diseases, and leprosy is extremely contagious, should be wholly isolated. Having made these few simple observations, we shall now go on to consider the miracle recorded in the Gospel.

"*As Jesus was going to Jerusalem He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*" Samaria lies between Judea and Galilee, so that it is impossible to cross from one province to the other without passing through Samaria, or making a long circuit to the east on the opposite side of the Jordan.

"*And as He entered into a certain town there met Him ten men that were lepers.*" We do not know the name of this town; the Gospel does not specify it, but most likely it was that which is now called *Diennin,* midway on the road between Nazareth and Sichem.[1] The ten lepers came out to meet Jesus near this town. It is not to be wondered at that ten of them should be found together, either because, as I have said, lepers were at that time more numerous in Palestine than at present, or because, driven out from the abodes of man and wandering here and there, they

[1]Didon, Life of Jesus Christ, vol. i., p. 140.

naturally sought one another out, that, by living together, they might mitigate at least in some measure the bitterness of their grief and the anguish and solitude of the merciless isolation to which they were condemned. The fact that a Samaritan was found among them shows that by some general understanding they came together from different countries or provinces. Those poor stricken souls had doubtlessly often heard Jesus' named and spoken of as a great prophet, as a great teacher, and as the expected Messias; and the fame of the miracles wrought by Him had certainly reached their ears, and in consequence the hope of being healed of their affliction by Him had naturally sprung up in their hearts. It is natural for one stricken with a dangerous malady to hope for a cure, even when a cure to all appearances is impossible. How natural was it, then, for those poor unfortunate souls to entertain a hope of being healed by Jesus, of whose goodness and power they had heard so many marvelous reports. It may be that some kind person, compassionating those unhappy mortals, and himself desirous of seeing a miracle, had run to them and, standing afar off, called out to them, telling them that Jesus of Nazareth, the worker of so many miracles, was coming toward the town; that He could heal them; that they ought not to allow so favorable an occasion to pass without making the most of it; that they should go to Him, ask and implore Him to heal them; and that He, who had been so good and merciful to others, would surely hear their prayer.

No news could have been more cheering to the

hearts of those poor lepers. They at once came together, the stronger tenderly and compassionately supporting the weaker, and took their position by the side of the road along which Jesus was to pass; and scarcely had they seen Him in the distance and heard the noise of His approach, standing afar off, as by law they were obliged to do, than they began to cry out as best they could: "*They lifted up their voice.*" And what did those poor creatures say? What was the lament, the cry, the ardent prayer which with eager, earnest gesture they addressed to Jesus? They said: "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*" They called Him by His proper name, but they added the title of honor, given Him by the people and so befitting to Him: *Master, Rabbi.* Their cry and their prayer is so beautiful, simple, and eloquent that no words more natural or more efficacious can be conceived. This is a prayer prompted by need and by nature itself, and it is one which should issue from our hearts and lips every time we kneel in the presence of God: "Lord, be merciful to me." It is a confession of our wretchedness; it expresses our trust in God; it is the cry of humility and hope, the two wings by which we rise up to God. My friends, when we are afflicted and desolate, when we groan under the weight of our sorrows, and at times know not how to pray or what to say, let us prostrate ourselves in God's presence and repeat this short and holy prayer: "*Lord, be merciful to me.*" The poor lepers did not say: "Master, free us from this leprosy, cleanse us of this scurvy, of these fetid wounds that cover us;" they simply showed them to Our

Lord, knowing that the sight of them would move one with a heart to hear their prayer.

Very likely, as usually happened, a large crowd followed Jesus, desirous of seeing a miracle. The eyes of all were eagerly fixed on the Master and on the lepers; there was absolute silence and the expectation was intense. Jesus looked lovingly and tenderly on them, showing that He sympathized with them in their distress, and then, in a voice vibrating with feeling, itself an assurance that their desire would be gratified, He said: "*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*" Why did not Jesus at once cleanse the lepers where they were, as had been His constant habit, whenever He was asked to work a miracle? Why did He want the lepers to go and show themselves to the priests? It is needless to say that Jesus could have worked miracles in any way that seemed best to Him and that no one had a right to lay any conditions upon Him; still it is not rash humbly and reverently to inquire why He had recourse to this unusual method in the case of the ten lepers, and in pursuing our inquiry we shall follow the teaching of the Fathers and of the best interpreters.

According to the Mosaic Law[1] it was, as I have already said, the duty of the priests to verify the existence of leprosy and its cure; again, Jesus wished by this act of respect for the Law and of deference toward the priests, whom He knew to be most hostile to Him, to disarm and conciliate them; again, He sent the ten lepers to the priests to test their faith and obedience, and thus in a measure to give them an opportunity to merit the

[1]Lev. xxiv.

miracle; and finally, it may be, He wished the priests themselves to be witnesses of the miracle, that thus their eyes might be opened to the truth.

Undoubtedly, we must believe that Jesus pronounced the words: *"Go, show yourselves to the priests,"* in such a way that the lepers understood that they would certainly be healed, not by the power of the priests, but by His who sent them to the priests. Hence they set out joyously to go to the priests, *"and it came to pass that as they went they were made clean."* From the Gospel text it is clear beyond any doubt that the cleansing or healing was instantaneous, although there is not a word to indicate how it came about. It is simply said: *"And it came to pass that as they went, they were made clean."* Nothing could add to the certainty of the miracle. The malady was visible to all; it was one, the nature of which was known to all; its cure was exceedingly rare; and even in the rare cases in which it was cured, medicines were necessary, convalescence was long and progressed slowly, and never was there a case known of instantaneous healing. But here the restoration of the ten to health took place on the public highway; it was instantaneous; all were healed together, simply by obeying the command of Christ; no remedy was applied, and there was no previous attention of any kind. The miracle took place, as I have said, on the public highway, and as is likely, in the presence of the multitude, who followed the lepers, curious to see what would happen. There was not only one cured, but ten; had there been only one or two, there might have been a suspicion that they were deluded; that they

wished to deceive others or were themselves deceived; but that all ten should have been deluded or that they should have been deceived or that they should have wished to deceive others, without any possible motive and against their own interest, nay, exposing themselves to greater danger by so doing, is impossible and too much to ask rational men to believe. The healing, then, of the ten lepers, as it is recorded in the Gospel, considered in all its detail and looked at merely from a common-sense point of view, appears to be a fact concerning which there can be no possible doubt, and therefore a fact which is evidently superhuman, beyond the power of man, or in other words, a true miracle.

And here it seems to me I should leave the commentary on this Gospel miracle incomplete if I failed to make another observation, or rather application, which is touched upon by all Catholic commentators, and which is always seasonable.

The leprosy with which those miserable men were covered, by which they were deformed, made unsightly and repulsive, was a figure of sin. Leprosy works frightful havoc on the body, covering it with disgusting sores, with offensive gangrened wounds and devouring it alive, and sin works the same on the soul. It covers the soul like a leprosy; it changes and horribly defaces the image of God imprinted upon it; it deforms it and renders it odious in His sight. Who can cleanse the soul of so much filth? Who can brush away those festering ulcers that pollute it? Who can heal those gaping wounds from which issue an intolerable stench? Who can restore in it again the image

of God and make it bloom with pristine beauty? God alone can do this, my friends, because as He alone created in Baptism that masterpiece of beauty, a soul adorned with divine grace, so He alone can remake it by clothing it again with divine grace; He alone can do it and He earnestly desires to do it. God can wash the soul clean from the leprosy of sin by directly and immediately pouring His grace into it, without employing any intermediate instrument or agency, and thus adorning it again with its original beauty; who can doubt this? And yet He wishes in doing all this to associate man with Himself, or rather, He wishes to associate the priest with Himself, employing him as an instrument or agency, so that ordinarily He does nothing of this nature without his concurrence. God wills to loose the sinner from the leprosy of sin and to make him again His son by adoption through the agency of the priest.

Christ said to the ten lepers, who with tears in their eyes besought Him to heal them: "*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*" So also He says to us sinners, who beseech Him to heal our souls and to pardon our sins. "Yes," He says, "I will cleanse you of your leprosy, I will pardon you your sins, I will clothe you again with the precious vesture of grace, but, *Go, show yourselves to the priests.*" Who can say that this condition, laid upon us as necessary to the forgiveness of our sins, is a hardship? Is He not the absolute Lord and Master, whose mandate we must all obey? Could He not impose conditions much more severe and burdensome? And if He did, should we not be even then grateful for His gentleness and

mercy? Who will say, no? He, then, says to us: *"Go, show yourselves to the priests;"* that is, open your heart to them, lay bare your conscience; for these same priests, in order to obtain pardon of their sins, must submit to the same law; they must, like you, open their conscience to their brother priest; and as they themselves have need of mercy and charity, so they will be merciful and charitable to you. Fear not to reveal to them your weaknesses and your sins; these will forever be buried in their hearts. And the advantage you will derive from manifesting your conscience to the priest will not be slight; you will be forced to study your heart and to know yourself better; you will learn your passions, especially your master passion, and your inclinations; and the shame you will feel in going over your sins and confessing them will be a part of the penance which you must do; it will restrain you from giving way to your passions, it will humble the natural pride of your heart, it will strengthen you and make you generous in bearing up against the daily trials and temptations that you must endure. Have no shame or hesitancy, then, in obeying, as the lepers did, the command, not of man, but of Jesus Christ, to go show yourselves to the priests by confessing to them, and thus be cleansed of the leprosy of sin.

We should bear in mind that the narrative of facts, as given in the Gospel, is always extremely concise, only the most necessary points being touched upon, and everything else left to be supplied or inferred by the reader. There is no doubt that when Jesus said to the ten lepers: *"Go, show yourselves to the priests,"* although He did not

say so in so many words, He left no doubt upon their minds that they would certainly be healed, and hence their faith being full and unhesitating, and their obedience prompt and blind, they at once set out to do as He told them. While they were going along, all at once the scales of leprosy fell from them, their gaping wounds closed, and their flesh was completely healed and wore again the glow and the bloom of perfect health. They looked at one another in amazement and they could scarcely trust their eyes. We can easily imagine the joy of those poor lepers, who had only now been outcasts from all intercourse with their fellow-men and condemned to a life of relentless and atrocious cruelty that was worse than death, on seeing themselves privileged to return to social life and to the bosom of their families. The healing, as I have said, was instantaneous and there was not the shadow of a doubt in their minds but that Jesus Christ had wrought the miracle. The instantaneous and prodigious healing of these poor men from the leprosy of the body is a figure of the equally instantaneous and still more prodigious healing from sin, which Jesus Christ works in us through sacramental confession. When we, following the teachings of faith and obedient to the commands of Jesus Christ, honestly and straightforwardly confess our sins to His minister, and when the minister in the name of Jesus Christ pronounces over us the sacred words, "*I absolve thee,*" the leprosy of sin falls from our souls and they are again clothed with the same divine beauty with which they were enriched in holy Baptism. If we could but see what goes on in the soul in that

instant, and the wonderful transformation that takes place, we should be filled with joy, equal to, if not greater than that which swept over the souls of the poor lepers when they looked and saw their bodies, only just now filthy and noisome, warm with the glow and freshness of perfect health.

Let us return to the Gospel narrative. What did those ten lepers do, what did they say, when they saw the miracle wrought upon them? We would think that every one of them should, without a moment's hesitation, have hastened back as fast as they could, and the distance could not have been great, and thanked and blessed Jesus, and recounted to every one what He had done for them; but this they did not do. Nine of them went on their way, as if nothing had happened, and doubtlessly hastened on to the priests to have their cure certified to, as the Mosaic Law required, and, having made the offering, received leave to return to their friends and families;[1] the tenth on the contrary, as soon as he saw that he had been cleansed and cured, went back at once, ran up to Jesus, threw himself on the ground before Him, pouring out his heart in grateful thanks: "*He fell on his face before His feet giving thanks.*" And who was this leper, who alone of the ten went back to tell Our Lord how grateful he was? The Gospel informs us: "*And this was a Samaritan.*"

The Jews, as I have elsewhere had occasion to

[1]Jesus Christ commanded the lepers to show themselves to the priests not only, as I think, because the Law prescribed this, or because He wished publicly to show that He respected the Law, but in order that the priests might see and could not help seeing with their own eyes the miracle wrought by Him and thereby become witnesses to it.

remark, hated and detested the Samaritans; they regarded them as unbelievers, as Pagans, and, if possible, as worse. In the miracle wrought Jesus made no distinction; He healed the Samaritan just as He healed the other nine, who were Jews, thus breaking down and destroying the national prejudice and showing that the purpose of the Gospel was to set up a kingdom of universal charity. A little while before our Saviour, in the presence of a multitude of Jews, proposed a Samaritan to a doctor of the Law, as a pattern of brotherly love,[1] and now He proposes to us another Samaritan as a model of gratitude. It would seem that He arranged things on set purpose, so as to humble the pride of the Hebrews and to destroy their inveterate prejudice against the Samaritans. It may be well to notice another reason why the good Samaritan alone went back to Jesus. He knew very well that if he had presented himself to the priests, they would have spurned him and disdained his offering, precisely because he was a Samaritan; and he also knew that Jesus, who had so kindly and promptly healed him, would receive him affectionately; and that it was better in any event to give thanks to Him, who, to heal him, had wrought so stupendous a miracle, than to present himself in the Temple and to the priests, who had done nothing and who could not do anything for him.

The good Samaritan, prostrate at the feet of Jesus, showed his gratitude as best he could by words and acts and tears of joy, all the while blessing the divine Master. Jesus received him with

[1]Luke x. 33.

every mark of affectionate tenderness, looking lovingly upon him, but saying nothing. The apostles and the multitude gathered about Jesus, gazing upon Him in amazement and wondering that He did not speak. Finally He broke silence, saying: "*Were not ten made clean? Where are the nine?*" Into these words, as you will instinctively perceive, my friends, Jesus threw an accent of sorrow and sadness, of dignified and tranquil complaint, which it would be difficult to express in a lengthy discourse. "I know well that I healed ten, and how is it that I see only one here? Where are the other nine?" These words were addressed neither to the Samaritan nor to the apostles; they were a sort of soliloquy with Himself. After a short but dignified pause, Jesus looking around, said solemnly: "*There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger.*" Of the ten lepers, who had been so marvelously healed, only one felt himself bound to return and give thanks, and this was, not a son of Abraham, or one taught in the Law and the Prophets, but a stranger and a Samaritan.

There is a circumstance here to be noticed which I think of great importance. Here Jesus clearly states that He is God: "*There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger.*" Now the stranger that returned to give glory, or to give thanks, as was his duty, gave glory and thanks to Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ therefore spoke of Himself and spoke as God.

One of the most grievous offenses, one of the most cruel wounds, that a noble and generous soul can receive, is that of ingratitude from those on

whom he has bestowed favors, especially if they are bound to him by ties of kinship or friendship, or if the favors have been great and notable. St. Bernard truly says that of all things ingratitude is most displeasing to God; that it is like a hot wind that dries up the fountains of mercy and the streams of grace.[1] And is it not true, my friends, that, when you are conscious of having lavished kindnesses on friends, of having tenderly loved your children and toiled and drudged for them, and then find that they are ungrateful or even indifferent, you feel as if your heart had been run through with a sword and you spontaneously cry out: "The ingrates!" Very well, then; now estimate the offense we give God when we misuse or abuse His favors. These, whether we consider their number, or their quality, or their magnitude, or their long continuance, or the love of Him who grants them, could not be greater or more excellent. Our life, and all that is inseparable from life, its preservation during every instant of time, the means of preserving and perfecting it; faith and grace and the sacraments, and the future life that He promises us, are not these benefits, which, both in number and degree, surpass the comprehension of man? How have we used all these benefits, how have we corresponded with so much love? I put the question to you. We so frequently and so bitterly complain of the in-

[1] "Dico ego vobis, quoniam pro meo sapere nihil ita displicet Deo, præsertim in filiis gratiæ, in hominibus conversionis, quemadmodum ingratitudo. Vias enim obstruit gratiæ. . . . Ingratitudo ventus urens, siccans sibi fontem pietatis, rorem misericordiæ, fluenta gratiæ."—St. Bernard, Serm. li. in Cantic. etc., apud À Lapide, in hunc locum.

gratitude of man, whereas the benefits we confer are as nothing; with how much more reason may God complain of us, who frequently allow, I will not say hours or days, but weeks and months and years to pass without as much as saying: "O Lord, I thank Thee for the life Thou hast bestowed upon me, for the faith Thou hast given me, for the innumerable benefits Thou hast granted me."

We should especially show our gratitude to God when He cleanses us of the leprosy of sin in the sacrament of Penance. In this healing bath Jesus Christ washes us clean from the stains of sin and clothes us with the glorious mantle of His grace. Can it be, my dear friends, that we on coming out of this purifying bath should ever fail, like the nine lepers, to go to the foot of the altar, where Jesus abides in the August Sacrament, and there, kneeling down in His presence, like the grateful Samaritan, pour forth our soul in thanks and laud His goodness and mercy before men and angels? And if we did not do so we should be indeed ingrates, and Jesus Christ could rightly say to us: "And has not that leper, whom I washed in My blood, come to thank Me? So many Pagans and Gentiles give thanks to their idols for the benefits they think they receive from them; so many Mussulmans kneel in public and bless God, whom they know but imperfectly; so many heretics and schismatics, living in error, lift up their hands to Me and loudly thank Me for favors received; and the sons of the Church, My own children, who have been loosed from their sins and healed of the leprosy that was devouring them, never even think of giving Me thanks for all that has been done for

them!" Day by day, as morning and evening come round, let us pour out our grateful souls in thankfulness to God for the countless benefits of which He has been so profuse to us, and especially let us do so whenever we are cleansed in the sacrament of Penance of the leprosy of sin, always bearing in mind the great truth, that the most efficacious means of obtaining fresh favors from God is to show ourselves thankful for those already received.

Then, says St. Luke in closing his narrative, Jesus said to the Samaritan: "*Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.* You have believed My words; you obediently set out to show yourself to the priests as I bade you to do; your healing is the reward of your faith and of your obedience; more grateful than your companions, you came to thank Me, now rise and go thy way."

Here, as in similar places in Holy Writ, Jesus ascribes the cure of the leper to his faith, while the principal cause of the cure was the goodness and omnipotence of Jesus Christ; but from these words it appears that the leper's faith was also a partial cause, that is, if he had not had faith, he most assuredly would not have been restored to soundness and health. Although the words: "*Thy faith hath made thee whole,*" refer directly to the healing of the body, it is commonly held by interpreters that they refer also to the healing of the soul; first, because the soul is not excluded; next, because it was customary with Our Lord to heal the soul together with the body; and finally, because the behavior of the Samaritan, his thankfulness, and his gratitude, so highly eulogized by the

Saviour, leave no doubt as to his immediate and sincere conversion.

Let the example of this unfortunate Samaritan be always before our minds; he obtained, together with the healing of the body, the healing of the soul; he obtained both from the goodness of the divine Master, but not, as Christ bears witness, without his own co-operation: "*Thy faith hath made thee whole.*" We also shall obtain the salvation of our soul, but on condition that we faithfully co-operate, the root of which co-operation is faith: "*Thy faith hath made thee whole.*"

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY III

BRETHREN: I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit; and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, of which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.—EPISTLE, *Gal.* v. 16-24.

THESE words of the Apostle are taken from the fifth chapter of his Letter to the Galatians, and, as I have said elsewhere, belong to the third part of it, which treats entirely of morals. This you will yourselves have noticed on hearing it read. The passage which I am about to explain to you is divided into two parts, the one wholly different from the other. In the first, St. Paul gives a rapid

review of the works of the flesh, or of the sins we ought to avoid; and in the second, he calls attention to the fruits and the works of the spirit, or to the virtues we ought to practise. This exhortation of the Apostle presents no difficulties whatever and is eminently practical. I shall therefore do no more than amplify it somewhat in order that each of you may the more easily make an application of it to himself.

As we learn from the first part of this Letter, the Church in Galatia was terribly rent by discords; some holding that in order to be saved it was necessary to observe all the burdensome prescriptions of the Mosaic Law, and notably that of circumcision; others holding and rightly, that the ceremonial part of the Law of Moses had been abolished by Christ. Hence there were endless contentions, quarrels, and complaints, which led St. Paul to say to them, "*But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.*"[1] And here it will be neither superfluous nor out of place to make an observation. We are oftener than we should wish witnesses of disagreements, contentions, and open quarrels in the Church; parishioners oppose parishioners, laymen oppose priests and bishops, and priests and sometimes even bishops disagree among themselves, contending over this point or that, and sometimes even over a point of doctrine. It is certainly sad to see this in the Church, but the sight is not a new one; we see it in the Church of Galatia, during the lifetime of St. Paul, its founder. What wonder is it that what took place

[1]Chap. v. 15.

then should take place now? Faith and grace do not extinguish the weaknesses of our intellect and of our will, neither do they destroy our passions, but they do give us strength to combat and overcome them. How were the discords of the Church of Galatia settled? Who put an end to them and re-established peace? St. Paul did both by his apostolic authority. Let them also be settled and peace restored by that same authority among us. If the authority of the parish priest is not adequate to the needs, recourse may be had to the bishop, and if his authority is still inadequate, recourse may be had to the Bishop of bishops, the Pope; and if his judgment be delayed, we should have the firm and sincere purpose of abiding by it, and in this firm and sincere purpose will be found the surest guarantee of permanent peace.

This being the condition of affairs in the Church of Galatia, it was but natural that the Apostle, wishing to provide a remedy for them, should impress upon the faithful the necessity of charity and of mutual forbearance, and he therefore tells them that the whole Law of Christ is summed up in one phrase, namely, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"[1] Having laid down this fundamental principle, St. Paul goes on to develop it, and to show what must be avoided and condemned and what must be approved and exacted. And here begins our commentary.

"*I say then, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,*

[1]Ibid. v. 14.

for they are contrary one to another; so that you do not the things that you would."

In these words of the great apostle are briefly expressed the whole story of the struggle which every man feels going on in his heart, and which when manifested variously in words and deeds becomes a social struggle, a struggle of man against man. My friends, let us enter into ourselves, let us go down into the depths of our conscience, let us search the foldings of our spirit and listen to the throbbings of our heart, from the moment in which the light of reason first dawned upon us, down to this very day; and what do we find there? By what forces has our life been influenced and developed? We find within us two forces, each contending for dominion over the heart. Looking up on high, descending into the depths of my soul and listening to the voice of my conscience I feel and I am conscious that virtue is holy and beautiful; I prize and I esteem humility, modesty, disinterestedness, temperance, and meekness; I admire purity, patience, forgiveness of offenses, and charity; carried away with veneration, I feel like kneeling in reverence before those angels of charity, whose whole lives are consumed in caring for the orphan and the outcast, in assisting at the bedside of the poor and the dying. But on the other hand, vice and passion and their allurements draw me on; I long to rise in the world, I pursue vanity, I seek riches, I readily yield to the cravings of my appetite and to intemperance in eating and drinking; while praising sincerity I am at times untruthful; I am irritated against those who offend me and I thirst for revenge, the very thought

of which is a delight to me; I am fond of ease and a pleasant life, and I could wish that all things should be at my disposal. I have within me a tendency, an indestructible force, that bears me upward to the heights of virtue; I hear a cry that bids me to go forward and gain their summits; and at the same time I have also within me a tendency, an equally indestructible force, that carries me down toward the abyss of vice below; I hear within me a voice that calls me on, that invites and lures me to throw myself into the arms of passion and there gratify my desires. I am placed between virtue and vice, between good and evil; I am as a vessel beaten by impetuous and contrary winds. In me are verified the words of the poet: "*I see the good and I approve, and yet I choose the worse.*" And still more to the purpose are the words of the Apostle:[1] "*I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind.*" Why is this law? Whence comes this conflict within myself? Are there two souls in me, the one good, the other bad? I am conscious that there is only one, ever that same one, indivisible *I;* I am conscious that two forces work upon me as if from without; that it is in my power to obey

[1]No one, I think, has more vividly described the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between nature and grace, than St. Augustine in the "Confessions," bk. viii. c. xi. seq. Were this description shorter I would quote it here as a real masterpiece, even artistically considered. Cassian has also left us a passage on the same subject (Collat. iv.), where he says:

"Caro luxuriis ac libidine delectatur; spiritus ne ipsis quidem desideriis naturalibus acquiescit; illa concupiscit satiari somno, repleri cibo; hic vigiliis et jejuniis ita saginatur, ut ne ad ipsum quidem vitæ usum necessarium somnum cibumque velit admittere. Illa cupit exuberari copiis universis; hic ne exigui quidem panis quotidianam substantiam habere contentus est," etc.

either the one or the other; also I am conscious that there is a force that inclines me toward good, that impels me toward virtue, that invites me to its chaste embraces, that admirably responds to my noblest aspirations, that gives me a taste of the purest joys, that lifts me up into a more serene and tranquil atmosphere, and that wells up and overflows from the very fountains of my being; and all the while there is another force that pulls me down, that debases me in my own eyes, that brings the blush to my cheek, that agitates and disgusts me and sets my whole heart in a tempest. Whence, again I ask, comes this conflict? Whence come these two forces in my soul, the one contending against the other? Why this ceaseless duel, between two implacable enemies, of which my heart is ever the battleground?

Both faith and reason together give us the explanation of this lamentable fact. They teach us that the body, our lower nature, is drawn toward the alluring pleasures of sense; that the body, attracted by the pleasures of the sense, so congenial to its nature, carries with it more or less the soul, that abides in it; that the soul, before it is capable of rising to a knowledge of eternal truths, receives impressions from the external world, and hence visible and external objects, through the medium of the body, exercise a far greater influence and fascination on the soul than does truth itself; that sense anticipates by many years reason and the development of faith, and is therefore more living and potent. Next, faith teaches us that man through his own fault fell from the high state in which God created him and lost the dominion he

had over himself, and that in consequence his lower nature rose in rebellion against the higher and began to harass it and draw it after itself along the path that leads to sensual pleasure.

Now what should man do, being placed between these two contrary forces? To which of the two should he yield? Should he follow the baser desires of the flesh, or should he by combating them as a man follow the voice of conscience, and, as St. Paul says, allow himself to be led by the spirit? Faith and reason both teach us that it is our duty as men, and much more as Christians, to obey the voice of conscience and to follow whither the spirit of divine grace leads us. As men, guided by the light of natural reason alone, we should curb the unruly passions, which are a torment to us, and practise those natural virtues that are quite within the reach of our natural powers and in harmony with them. As Christians, enlightened by faith and borne up by grace, we should aim higher and take as our pattern Jesus Christ, the sovereign exemplar of every perfection.

Let us then, my friends, be up and doing. In this fierce and endless struggle between the spirit and the flesh, between grace and the passions, between virtue and vice, we must choose one side or the other, and we should not hesitate an instant as to which; let us courageously take the side of the spirit as against the flesh, of grace as against the passions, of virtue as against vice, of Christ as against the world. What purer joy, what more signal glory than to subdue the flesh, to restrain the passions, to conquer vice, to overcome the world, to rise toward Heaven on the wings of the

spirit, and to be beautiful with the beauty of God? True, this flesh which we bear about with us, is often irksome and a burden to the soul and fills us with feelings and sentiments which we would wish away: *"So that we do not the things that we would,"* but let us take a holy revenge upon it. How? By making both the flesh and the concupiscence feel what they would not by inflicting upon them the curb of mortification and by refusing to yield to their cravings.[1]

"But if you are led by the Spirit," continues St. Paul, *"you are not under the law."* What is the meaning of these words? "If you Galatians," he says, "follow whither the spirit leads, if you obey with docility the voice and the impulse of the grace that comes from Jesus Christ, you shall be superior to the Law of Moses and have within you a strength it can not give." This sentence of the Apostle may also bear another meaning, namely, this: If you allow yourselves to be led by the spirit or by the grace of Jesus Christ, you will free yourselves from the tyranny of the law of concupiscence and cast off its yoke, and in so doing, you will indeed be free, because, what you then do, you will not do from fear or compulsion, but because you yourselves wish to do it.

My friends when do we feel a law a burden to us and groan under its weight? When we regard it as something external to us, as imposed upon us by others, as contrary to our will, as something

[1]"Concupiscentiæ non permittunt vos implere quod vultis; nolite et vos eis permittere implere quod ipsae volunt, et ita nec vos, nec illae facietis quod vultis. Quamvis ergo concupiscentiæ fiant in vobis, non tamen perficiuntur, quia eis non consentitis." —St. Anselm, apud À Lapide, in hunc locum.

that, were it possible, we should absolutely refuse and do away with. But if we accept the law that is laid upon us, if we love it and make it our own, as if it were just what we wished, then we do not feel it burdensome; we obey it gladly, and far from regarding it as contrary to our liberty, we take it to our heart as we would a loyal friend, as something that leads us to do just what we ourselves are inclined to do. Here is a son, say, who dearly loves his father and who rejoices in obeying him. The father lays upon him a series of duties that imply and demand many and great sacrifices. Naturally the very thought of sacrifices is repellant to the son and he would, if he could, escape from them; but he loves his father, he reflects how happy he will make him by being promptly and generously obedient, and how happy he himself will be by gratifying his father, and in a spirit of determined resolution he magnanimously says to himself: "My father's will is mine, and come what may I will do as he wills." Do you think, my friends, that the son will find the duties laid upon him onerous? I think not. On the contrary, I think that the son's filial love in making the will of his father his own, will lighten every toil, sweeten every pain, and make sorrow itself a joy. You see men who voluntarily endure the most exhausting fatigues, the most trying and perilous toils; they scale the highest peaks of the Alps, climbing up ice-clad precipices; they traverse the burning sands of the desert; they open up a way with infinite toil and danger through mountains of ice in search of the North Pole; they daringly drive the lion and the tiger from their lair and

face their rage and fury. Say to these men: "What must you have endured! What pain and terrors!" They will only smile and reply: "Oh, no. We loved the work and braved the dangers only because they were to our taste, and why should we complain?" And thus it is, that what we wish ourselves, no matter how difficult and painful it may be, is always easy to do and agreeable to us. And in this I am sure you will agree with me. May, then, the will of God be our will and, if it is, we shall find the path we should pursue smooth and pleasant.

This, I fancy, is the meaning St. Paul intended to express when he said: "*If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law.*" United with God, and, by conforming our will to His, forming one with Him, we are free as He is free, and subject only to the law of our will, because God's will is our will. The law of the spirit or the will of God and our will are distinct and different; our will is necessarily subject to God's will as made manifest in His law, and it naturally feels this subjection; but if of the two we make one, it is clear that there is no longer one who imposes the law and one who is subject to it, but that both are one will and that this will acts freely and is a law unto itself. Let us then, my friends, so unite our will with God's will that the two will be but one, and then we shall be no longer under the law and our liberty will be complete.

Let us proceed to follow the Apostle. Having referred to the two laws, or to the two forces, in conflict the one with the other, namely, the flesh on the one side and the spirit, or divine grace, on

the other, he goes on to enumerate the works of each; having drawn for us a picture of two trees, he proceeds to point out to us their fruits, and as the trees are wholly different and contrary the one to the other, so also are their fruits unlike and contrary.

What are the fruits or the works of the flesh, or of that evil concupiscence which has its abode in the flesh? St. Paul tells us: "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury.*" Let us stop here a moment. I shall not attempt to explain one by one the full meaning and all that is implied in these words, lest in doing so I should say what might offend your ears or be unbecoming in a priest of the altar and to the holiness of the place in which we are gathered together. But as the Apostle, divinely inspired, wrote them in a Letter, that was certainly meant to be read in an assembly of the faithful, it is not unseemly in us to repeat them, and to say what is necessary and fitting to give you a horror of the works of the flesh, and this is precisely what the Church intends in having the words read to-day in the Holy Mass.

First of all, you will note that St. Paul in enumerating the works of concupiscence places first the shameful and filthy sins of the flesh. And why so? Because, I fancy, those sins are the most common and the ones that drag down to perdition the greatest number of souls. Next, you will note that in those four words, the Apostle embraces nearly all the principal forms which this filthy passion can, and in matter of fact does generally assume. And now what can I say to you to put you on your

guard against them? I say to all you who listen to me: Fly, fly, detest, and abominate incontinence in every form. Are you loosed from the bonds of marriage? Keep your hearts clean and bear in mind that your bodies are the temples, the abiding places, of the Lord. Are you bound by the holy bonds of marriage? Preserve inviolably your sworn fidelity, one to the other; and bear in mind that this fidelity can be violated and outraged by a single thought, by a single lawless affection, and by a single wicked desire, as Jesus Christ Himself tells us in the Gospel.[1] Be pure, be chaste, be spotless, always and everywhere, even when no human eye can see you, because even there the open eye of God is upon you. Let those who understand, take heed.

Having put the sins of incontinence at the head of the list of the works of the flesh or of our corrupt nature, St. Paul goes on to name others, and he speaks of idolatry or the serving of idols. In our day and in the society in which we live, there is no need of combating the worship of idols, or of raising a warning voice against this, the lowest degradation to which human ignorance can descend. Among us the shameful worship of idols no longer exists, but it was common when St. Paul wrote his Letters. He classes it among the works of the flesh, because it is essentially a worship of the senses, since by it man robs God of His spiritual and invisible nature and clothes Him in visible

[1]St. Jerome in explaining the word *luxury*, which I have translated *dissoluteness*, says (see À Lapide):

"Ipsaque quoque opera nuptiarum, si non verecunde et honeste, ac quasi sub oculis Dei fiant, ut tantum liberis fruatur, immunditiam et luxuriam nominavit Apostolus."

and material forms, represents Him under the shape of man, of beasts, and of senseless brutes, which having eyes see not, ears and hear not, and tongues and speak not; and prostrating himself before the works of his hands cries out in a delirium of blindness and ignorance: "These are my gods, these I adore." To us such a perversion of mind and heart seems incredible, and yet do we not see the same thing, and quite commonly, too, in our Christian lands under other forms? Do not the avaricious worship their wealth? Have not the proud, the gluttonous, and the dissolute their own peculiar worship? Do they not offer sacrifice to ambition, to intemperance in food and drink, and to the objects of their lawless love? Well has the poet said:

> Of gold and silver ye have made your god,
> Differing wherein from the idolater
> But that he worships one, a hundred ye.[1]

Away, then, with all idolatry in every form. Created, as we are, to know, love, and adore God alone, our Creator in heaven, let us not outrage Him and debase ourselves by giving a disorderly love to His creatures, almost worshiping them, to our own equals, and frequently to our inferiors.

Next after idolatry St. Paul enumerates among the works of the flesh *witchcrafts* or *poisonings*. From the fact that we find witchcraft or poisoning named by the Apostle after idolatry, we are forced to conclude that this horrible crime was not uncommon. It is frightful to think that, in Græco-Roman society in the days of St. Paul, in the midst of wealth and refinement, of letters and

[1]Dante, Inferno, canto xix, verse 112.

art, and of all that splendid civilization, poisonings and their usual accompaniments, betrayals, and infidelities, were almost ordinary occurrences. And yet profane history itself bears witness that such was the case. Still this need excite no surprise since we know that refinement of luxury and art and excessive wealth lead to the greatest corruption of morals and to nameless crimes. If deeds of blood, suicides and homicides, are common in our boasted Christian civilization, what must have been the condition of things in a civilization that was Pagan?

St. Paul still continuing to enumerate the sins of the flesh, adds these: "*Enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects.*" All the passions that torment our poor nature may be reduced to two, namely, *desire* and *anger*. All of us without exception constantly long for and strive to acquire what pleases and is beneficial to us, such as honors, riches, pleasures, and the like, and these are all the results of the passion of *desire;* we all equally repel and hate whatever impedes the acquiring of these goods, as we think them to be, and this is the result of the passion of *anger*. Desire impels us to seek pleasure; anger impels us to thrust aside whatever stands between us and its acquisition. By reasoning still more subtilely we may, as St. Thomas teaches, reduce the two passions of *desire* and *anger* to one, namely, *love*. We love and we wish what is good, even when what we seek is evil, because then we always apprehend what we seek as something good. It is the same love that impels us to seek what is good and to hate whatever prevents our

attaining it. Hence hate is love, a love of good, real or seeming, that will not bide contradiction.

In the first part of the Epistle, just explained, St. Paul enumerates the works of the flesh that spring from the passion of desire; he here enumerates those that spring from the passion of anger. He would have us banish from us all anger, which impels us to seek revenge, or to do or to wish to do our neighbor harm; he would have us banish from us *"enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, murders,"* all of which break the bond of charity, sow the seed of hatred, destroy the peace of families, of parishes, and of society. These same disorders, against which St. Paul raised his voice and which he strove to banish from the primitive Church, we see existing among ourselves, and now as then, even though we are Christians, disturbing the peace of families, giving rise to parties and contentions in parishes, and leading to rancor and feuds in civil society. We see contentions, rivalries and enmities, quarrels, dissensions, and violent partisan spirit. We have only to open our eyes to see and our ears to hear, and we shall be convinced that, now as in the days of St. Paul, to use his own words, *"we bite and devour one another."* And yet we are brothers, children of the same Father in heaven, and of the same Mother, the Church. How shameful all this, how unbecoming, how shocking!

Nor does St. Paul stop here; he goes on in his impetuous way to enumerate other disgraceful works of the flesh: *"Drunkenness, revelings, and such like."* These words of the Apostle call to our

mind a melancholy picture of which we are almost daily witnesses. Many endure the pangs of hunger, have not wherewith to cover their nakedness, and are miserably housed or live in hovels; while others feast sumptuously, drink to excess, spend fabulous sums in luxury, in enjoyment, and in guilty pleasures. Drunkenness deprives man of that which makes him a man, namely, of his reason, and this vice, if I may speak frankly, is more common among the poor than among the rich. Drunkenness and poverty! They go together and no companionship more repulsive can be imagined. Fancy fathers drunk in saloons and mothers and children crying with hunger and freezing from cold at home. These are disorders and evils that wring the heart and seem impossible in the society of Christians. Therefore take well to heart and never forget the indignant words of the Apostle concerning such as are guilty of them: "*Of the which I foretell you as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of heaven.*" Let us not delude ourselves, my friends; those who are guilty of the works of the flesh, God will inexorably condemn to eternal punishment.[1] This is the judgment of the Apostle, it is the teaching of the Gospel, and not a syllable of it should escape our memory; let us think it over, for surely the threat of so appalling a punishment requires that we should do so.

[1]Some of the faults mentioned by St. Paul, may be frequently simply venial offenses, such as emulations, anger, jealousy, envy, and the like; but under certain conditions they may be grave sins. Judging from the words with which St. Paul closes the enumeration it is clear he is speaking of instances in which they are *grave sins.*

Any one at all familiar with the style of St. Paul will have noticed that he is fond of antithesis, or that style of writing in which a word or a phrase is set against its contrary, and of this we have here an example. Having given us a long, ugly list of the works of the flesh or of the sins of the passions, he proceeds to name an equally long list of the works of grace or of the fruits of the spirit, as exemplified in those who live in the friendship of God: "*But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity.*" Here, my friends, is, as it were, a tree covered with flowers and laden with fruit. Whence come those flowers and fruit? Whence do they draw the sap that nourishes and invigorates them? From the seed and root that gave them life. Here is a man adorned with every Christian virtue; whence come those virtues, whence come those deeds by which the virtues are made manifest and through which they are developed? They come from the spirit of God, from grace; this is the seed from which they originally sprang. St. Paul in setting before us the flowers and the blessed fruits of the spirit, as he has already set before us the bitter and death-bearing fruits of concupiscence, begins with charity, the queen of all the virtues, the foundation which supports them all, as the trunk of a tree supports its branches; charity, that is, toward God and toward our neighbor; charity, not profuse in words, but rich in works. The fruit of such charity is *joy,* that is, a clear, serene, and tranquil conscience, which diffuses throughout the whole soul a delicious gladness that radiates

from the countenance and speaks in the light of the eye.

Inseparably united with this pure and contented conscience is an interior peace, an equilibrium or a nice adjustment of all the powers of the soul; or as St. Augustine says, an orderly tranquillity, by which all the powers of the soul act together in unchangeable harmony. To *peace* and *joy, patience* and *benignity* are naturally allied, and these dispose us to be merciful, to be gentle and modest in speech and conduct in all things, and with all classes of persons, even with the wicked, the malevolent, and our enemies. With these gifts of the spirit are also associated *goodness,* which leads us to do good to all,[1] *mildness,* which disposes us to suffer all things without bitterness, and with even a serene countenance.[2] Then comes *fidelity,* which, being hostile to deceit and untruthfulness, makes us loyal to our engagements and faithful in discharging all our duties; *modesty,* which rules our external actions; and, finally, *continency,* which curbs and regulates all our desires according to the infallible teachings of faith.

Of course St. Paul does not here enumerate all the gifts of the spirit or all the fruits of grace; he enumerates only the principal ones as they come to his mind, and such as he thought applicable to the Galatians, who were then divided by internal discords. But from this enumeration we may learn much. It is like a richly set table, pro-

[1] "Bonitas est virtus, ex qua oritur utilitas, seu affectus, qui sit fons utilitatum."—St. Hieronymus, apud A Lapide.

[2] "In omnibus motibus vestris nihil fiat, quod eujuscumque offendat aspectum, sed quod vestram deceat sanctitatem."—St. Augustine, apud A Lapide.

vided with all manner of exquisite dishes of which each takes what is most agreeable to him and most beneficial. We should do the same, fixing our attention on the virtue most needful to each of us. "*Against such there is no law,*" says St. Paul. If a man lives according to the spirit of the Gospel and does its works, what law can reprove and condemn him? Of what law does he stand in need? He is a law unto himself and has nothing to fear, since he perfectly fulfils what the law prescribes.

The last words of the Epistle are these: "*And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.*" St. Paul seems to reason in this way: Jesus Christ took upon Himself the punishment of our sins; He expiated our faults in His own flesh; for us He crucified His flesh; what, then, should we do? The flesh is the fuel of our passions, within it lies concealed concupiscence and all the vices of which concupiscence is the prolific mother. Concupiscence makes ceaseless war upon the spirit. We should therefore range ourselves on the side of the spirit, under the banner of Christ, and combat the flesh and the concupiscence which day and night lays snares for us and torments us. As Christ crucified His flesh, so should we crucify our flesh, with its vices and concupiscences, and then we shall prove ourselves His true disciples and soldiers. And how shall we crucify our flesh? Shall we crucify it materially as did Jesus Christ? No, but morally, for this is profitable to us and incumbent upon us. Does concupiscence puff us up, make us proud, vain, and ambitious? Crush it out by being humble. Does it lead us on and impel us to

seek wealth, to accumulate a fortune, regardless of the fact that in acquiring money we violate justice and take the bread from the mouths of the famishing? Let us refuse to incur such guilt and let us be lavish of our goods to the poor. Does it tempt us to go to excess in eating and drinking, and as St. Paul elsewhere says, to make a god of our belly? Let us resist so debasing a passion, keep ourselves well within the limits of temperance, and mortify our appetites. Does it urge us to live a life of ease and indolence? Does it torment us with the pangs of envy? Does it kindle in our heart the flame of anger? Does it caress us and strive to seduce us with the blandishments and the degrading pleasures of sense? If so, let us lay bare its snares, repel its assaults, subdue and trample under foot this implacable enemy, no matter under what guise or form it presents itself. Let us restrain concupiscence and keep it in check by a fear of the divine judgment to come, by tireless watchfulness over the senses, by prayer, mortification, and penance, and then we shall be of the number of those who are of Christ.

HOMILY IV

At that *time Jesus said to His disciples:* No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You can not serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the

raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought can add to his statute one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.—Gospel, *Matt.* vi. 24-33.

On the right hand shore of the Lake of Genesareth or Tiberias, distant about a three-hours journey from Capharnaum, arises a solitary hill flanked on either side by a rising ground and at its base a beautiful meadow. The plain all around is one sheet of green, and at harvest time resembles a sea of grain, gently undulating when swept by the breeze. To the north may be seen the white summit of Libanus, and to the east the azure waves of the lake dancing in the sunlight, and enclosed by shores once covered with oleanders, with vineyards and groves of olives, but now bare and desolate. In the month of April this

hill is covered with lilies, and swarms of birds sweep through the air above, tranquil and fragrant with the breath of spring, singing joyously. According to an ancient and respectable tradition, it was on this hill that Jesus Christ delivered the discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount.[1] The passage of the Gospel, which you have just heard, is taken from this discourse. It has about it an incomparable charm and beauty; for, I should say, it is a hymn, a canticle to Providence; and in the words upon which we are about to meditate, we shall feel the outpouring of the whole soul of Jesus. He reposes and rejoices with illimitable confidence in the infinite love of His Father, who watches over and loves His Son and those who seek shelter under His protecting arm. But I must hasten on and allow you to taste for yourselves the ineffable sweetness of this passage in the Gospel.

"No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You can not serve God and Mammon." Jesus Christ here sets forth a doctrine the very statement of which is its demonstration. It is not possible to serve two masters, that is, when one is opposed to the other. And why? Because the two being contrary, the one to the other, by clinging to one you necessarily offend the other, and by taking sides with one the other naturally considers himself abandoned and despised. And who are these two

[1]See Didon's Life of Jesus Christ, vol. i., c. iv. The place on the mountain in which Jesus delivered this sermon is very probably that which to-day is called, Diebel Koroun-Hattin.

masters, the one hostile to the other, both of whom it is impossible to serve? Jesus Christ tells us in the last words of this verse: "*You can not serve God and Mammon.*" It is unnecessary to tell you who God is. But who is Mammon? Mammon is a Phenician word, then in common use in Palestine,[1] and signifies *riches* or *money;* and hence the words of Christ may be rendered in this way: "You can not at the same time serve God and give your heart to money or to the accumulation of the goods of this world." You will note that Christ does not say: You may not possess money or wealth or the goods of the world; you may not use them, or preserve them, or increase them; but He says you can not serve God and at the same time serve Mammon; you can not, as it were, make riches equal to God, thus becoming the base slave of wealth instead of its Master. What truth and wisdom there is in these words! Let us search deeper into their meaning.

Man, as created by God, has need of many things; he needs food, and drink, and clothes, and a house to shelter him; he needs those who will furnish him the means to procure all these things, and others that it is not necessary to enumerate. How is he to obtain them? How will he induce others to give them to him for his use or property? By giving them in turn things that they have need of; and thus is the law of barter or exchange established. But to facilitate and make more general this interchange of commodities, money was

[1]St. Augustine (De Sermone Domini in monte, lib. ii. c. xiv) assures us that even in his day riches were called *Mammon* at Carthage. As all know, Carthage was a Phenician colony.

invented, which by general agreement is the equivalent of everything. Hence food and drink, clothes and houses, animals and fields, pleasures and what you will may all be had for money and, in this sense Scripture itself says, that "*all things obey money.*"[1] Now as man has need of many things to satisfy his legitimate wants, and as he has need of an infinity of things to enjoy the pleasures that he longs for, whether lawful or unlawful, so all his energies are expended in acquiring money, because with it he can, or fancies he can, purchase all things. Hence we may say that in a sense all the desires of man are concentrated in one single desire, namely, in the desire or love of wealth, since this is universally thought to be the equivalent of all things. This, my friends, is the reason for the ravenous hunger and insatiable thirst for riches, in the pursuit of which men wear out their lives. When in quest of gold they allow neither conscience, nor law, nor honor, nor even health and life, which they so ardently love, to stand in their way.

Hunger and thirst for wealth are stimulated, not alone by the pleasures which they can purchase for those who choose to enjoy them, but also by other powerful motives, such as the uncertainty of the future, the fear of poverty, the love of children, of nieces and nephews, and the desire and purpose of doing good. I do not hesitate to say that the lust of money, as a secure means of procuring enjoyment, is at bottom the first and the most terrible of the passions that tyrannize over human nature; it is the first, not as an end, but as

[1]Eccles. x. 19.

a means to an end, and any one who attentively studies history and human nature, will I am confident, agree with me. Hence the two phrases of the Holy Spirit are true: *"The desire of money is the root of all evils,"* and: *"Nothing is more wicked than a covetous man."* Even the greatest of Pagan poets stigmatized the hunger for gold as execrable, *Auri sacra fames;* and another sings that gold is the god of men, the supreme majesty.[1] Our divine Saviour, then, who knew with an unfailing knowledge the heart of man, had only too much reason to brand with a just condemnation this vile and odious passion, which dares to range itself by His side and divide with Him His empire over the hearts of men. *"You can not,"* He says, *"serve God and Mammon."* Let us go on with our commentary. The reason or the pretext which the avaricious are accustomed to allege for their thirst for riches and for never saying that they have enough, is this: We must provide for ourselves and for our children; we must live, we must eat and drink and be clothed, and besides all these we have need of many other things, and how shall we provide them without money? To give ourselves to getting money, to make slaves of ourselves in acquiring it, is as necessary to us as is the air we breathe.

Jesus anticipates this difficulty and answers it with natural eloquence of exquisite beauty. "You say," He says, "without money how shall we feed and clothe ourselves? *Therefore I say to you; be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat,*

[1] . . . . Clausum possidet arca Jovem.—PETRONIUS.
Inter nos sanctissima divitiarum majestas.—JUVENALIS, Sat. i.

nor for your body, what you shall put on." You will note that Jesus does not say: "Take no thought of food or dress, or of providing what is necessary; leave off laboring and toiling; do not plough or sow your fields or prune your vines; take your ease and enjoy a blessed repose." He, who labored in a poor workshop until His thirtieth year, did not and could not say this; He could not say it because He was then engaged in the arduous labor of teaching the people and He made labor a condition of life, sanctifying it in His own person. But He said: "*Be not solicitous*" or over-anxious, about these things. He did not condemn labor, but what He condemned was the immoderate desire, the fretful anxiety, the fever to labor in order to heap up riches, which is quite a different thing from the honest toil expended in providing what is necessary and becoming to one's state, but not what is extravagant and superfluous. The doctrine of Christ is this: Labor and toil as a Christian at any honest occupation or calling to provide for yourselves and for your children, against the uncertainties of the future, and to aid those who may be in need or distress, but do not slave to satisfy the implacable lust for wealth; labor according to your state or calling and with such gifts as God has given you, and then trust with a serene and filial confidence in the infinite goodness of God your Father. And why? Because God has given us life and life is more than food and raiment; now whosoever gives what is greater, gives also what is less; He who has given us life, which is more than food and raiment, must give us food and raiment, which are necessary to

our life. The argument is most simple and admits of no reply. Who, having built a house, does not strive to preserve it? Or who, having bought a horse, does not feed and care for it? Or who is the father that refuses bread to his children? The maker and owner of anything whatever, even though it be of very little value, is anxious to preserve it; and we are all the work of God and tenderly loved by Him; how, then, can He forget us or neglect to provide for our needs?

Still further to enforce His argument Our Lord makes use of a most beautiful image. He was speaking in the open air, seated on a hill, and it may be at that moment a flight of birds passed through the air above Him, or they sang joyously from the trees near by, and continuing His discourse, He enlivened it with a striking picture visible to all His hearers. Lifting His eyes on high and pointing upward He said: "*Behold the birds of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?*" In this image, in these words, uttered with an accent of touching tenderness, and with eyes lighted up with joy, Our Lord reveals to us the sincerity of His soul and the benevolence of His divine heart. The birds were displaying their wealth of plumage in the bright sunlight. Who gave them that richness, that variety and beauty of color? Who clothed them in that radiant and gorgeous raiment? God, and God alone. They toil not, neither do they reap nor make pro-

vision against the future; and yet they live; the air, the trees, and the earth supply them with the necessary food; the earth spreads out for them a perpetual banquet and the running waters quench their thirst. Who nourishes them? *"Your heavenly Father."* He provides for them and does not permit a single one of them to die of hunger. Note that tender and affectionate form of expression: *"Your* Father feedeth them," as if He would say: God is not the Father of those little birds, but He is your Father, the Father of men; now if He feeds these little creatures, of so small value and of which He is not the Father, will He not also feed you, who are of so much more value than they, you, who are the greatest work of His hands, you, whose Father He declares Himself to be? A simpler or more effective argument than this, to demonstrate that God watches and must watch with fatherly care over each of us, can not be conceived.

Jesus adds still another proof, also perfectly intelligible to the people. Which of you, He asks, do what you will, can add a single cubit to his stature? *"Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?"* None of you can increase his height by a single iota,[1] or, as He says in another part of the Gospel, you can not make a single hair of your head white or black. Since, then, you can not do even this much, why do you

[1]It has been observed, and justly, that the words of Jesus Christ: *"Which of you can add to his stature one cubit,"* that is, about twenty inches, convey a strange meaning. What should be said is, "who can add the width of a thread, or a point, or a line to his stature." And this is true. Hence I am inclined to agree with Curci, who acutely observes that the Greek word ἡλικία rendered *stature*, means *age*, or *duration*, and that as life may

worry about the goods of the earth? As a rule you can not change things, you can not increase or diminish your store, you can not at will possess or dispossess yourselves of them. Be calm then, and having done what you can, leave the rest to God, your Father.

Of the things for which men are solicitous, two hold the first place, namely food and raiment, and as regards the body they are the most important. In the similitude of the birds Jesus has just shown that we should not be over-solicitous about food, and now, as regards raiment, he employs another figure, equally felicitous and beautiful. The fields round about were covered with fresh green grass and in the midst of the flowers that bloomed here and there, the white lily was conspicuous. Looking upon them and pointing to them Jesus continued: "*And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.*" How simple, what charm and truth in these words of the divine Master. You fret and worry, He seems to say, about what you shall put on; see those lilies, how beautiful they are, white as the driven snow. They have not labored, they have not woven those delicate fibers of which the fabric of their leaves are made; they have not fashioned their corolla, nor devised the

be regarded as a thread, and hence the expression, the thread of life, so the *cubit* to be added to the stature will mean a *cubit*, or about *twenty inches*, to be added to the *thread* of life, and will signify the least possible prolongation of our days. This idea was a popular one and answered to the scope of Christ, who wished to show the utter impotency of man to do certain things.

shapely and symmetrical folds and outlines of their calyx. Behold them, they are incomparably more beautiful and more magnificent than were the embroidered robes of Solomon, when he appeared in all the splendor of his regal state and majesty.[1] Again Jesus says, continuing His argument, what are those lilies? They are but grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. If, then, God clothes with such beauty this grass which you see, which is of little value, which lives but for a few days, with how much greater care will He clothe you, His children? The argument is always the same. If God is so lavish with creatures of little worth, will He not be more so with you, the masterpiece of His hands?

Then by way of gentle reproof Jesus adds these words: *"O ye of little faith."* He seems to say: Your faith, my children, would indeed be very weak; you would show that you know little of God and of His fatherly heart, and you would wound Him deeply, were it possible that you could think or believe that He, who so watchfully and tenderly cares for the least of His creatures, could forget you, His most loved children, and leave you destitute of the things necessary for you. No man and no Christian, who considers these beautiful and touching words of Our Lord and apprehends their meaning ever so little, can fail to be moved by them and encouraged to put the fullest trust in God.

[1]It is said that the ancient kings, and Solomon also, like the Bourbon kings, wore a mantle adorned with lilies. This may be true and then the words of Christ are exactly to the point.

Next follows a verse that sums up all that has gone before and is a natural consequence following from it. *"Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat or what shall we drink?"* And here let me again insist on what I said above, because it is a most important practical truth, namely that Jesus Christ, in inculcating the necessity of placing all our trust and hope in God and in His providence, has no intention of encouraging idleness and sloth, thus eliminating, as it were, the part, and the most noble part, that man has in determining, by the use of his free will, his destiny here and hereafter. Nothing could be more contrary to the teaching of the Gospel than that fatalism which encourages man in a life of idleness and expects all things from God; which is professed and practised by Mussulmans and by the Brahmins of India; which is an insult to our own conscience, and which implies a negation of that which constitutes the greatness of man, namely, of his liberty. Jesus Christ wills that man shall on his part do what he can, and He prohibits only that anxiety, unrest, and worry about things here below that arise from a lack of trust in Divine Providence, and hence He repeats again what He said in a preceding verse: *"Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?"* Where is the good of worrying? It only aggravates our interior trials, disturbs our peace of mind, and is an offense against God, since by worrying we show that we mistrust either His power or His goodness.

Our Saviour goes on still more vehemently con-

demning this anxiety about the things of this earth. Do you know, He seems to say, what your conduct is like when you are so solicitous and disquieted about the material goods of this world, even those that are necessary? Remember that then you act as do the Pagans: *"For after all these things do the heathens seek."* The Pagans either had no idea of Providence or a very imperfect one; just as they had no idea of God, or an imperfect or contradictory one. Without an idea of God and His providence or with a mutilated or imperfect one, it was but natural that the Pagans should worry continually in thinking about the things of this world and in accumulating its goods; inasmuch as being ignorant of it they could not rely upon the providence of God. Their ignorance was to be pitied; and will you, taught in the school of faith, you, the children of God, do as the Pagans did? To do so would in you be shameful and inexcusable. You are aware *"that your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."* But in order to be sure of His help is it enough that our Father knows our needs? Why does not our Saviour add the promise that necessary aid will come, when our needs are known? Among men it is indeed necessary to know another's needs in order to succor them, but this is not sufficient if the will and the power to give aid are wanting; but when there is question of God, who not only knows perfectly our needs but has also both the power and the will to supply them, it is enough to say: *"Your Father knoweth that you have need of these things."* He is omnipotent and He is benevolent, infinitely so, and once He

knows our needs, He can supply them and He will. Could a father who knows that his son is in need of food or raiment, possibly refuse to give them to him, if he is able? Now God is our Father, He can do all things, He loves us with a tender, an infinite love, compared with which the combined love of all the fathers on earth is as nothing, and hence He can not refuse to hold out a helping hand to us, when we are in need. In another passage of the Gospel Jesus uses these words: *"Which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? Or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion?"* In these words are revealed the fatherly heart of God toward us His children.

Here I see a difficulty that will arise in the minds of many of you and to which it is worth while to reply briefly. You will say: If God knows our needs, and who can doubt that He does, why should we pray to Him; and how does it happen that knowing them, He frequently, though besought, does not listen to us, does not succor us, and permits us to go on suffering?

He knows our needs better than we ourselves know them, and yet He wills that we should make them known to Him, that we should pray to Him; and this He wills because it is good for us to pray to Him; it is beneficial to us, since by praying we kindle faith, revive hope in Him, exercise humility, and in a sense merit what we ask of Him. He wishes that we should pray to Him, not that He has any need of it, but for our own good. It is true that sometimes He does not hear our prayers and allows us to go on struggling against the

trials with which we are beset. And why? Not because He knows not our needs or because He, who loves us as His children, seemingly delights in our suffering, but because in His wisdom He knows it is useful to us to suffer, to endure privation and want; because He thus gives us an occasion to practise patience, to redouble our efforts, and to persevere in prayer; because He thus trains us to fight the battles of virtue, to increase our merits, and to detach ourselves from an ill-regulated love of this world, thus constraining us to lift our thoughts and desires on high. So then, my dear friends, when you are struggling against the hardships of this life, when you are pinched by poverty and you see your wives and children and those dearest to you suffering the pangs of hunger and exposed to the winter's blasts, remember that God knows all this, that His loving eyes are always upon you, and, if the expression may be used, that He suffers with you and in you, that if He leaves you in distress, be assured that He does so because He loves you and wishes to enrich you with goods far greater and better than those for which you pine, and that He acts as a father who refuses a gift to a child which he knows will harm him.

Jesus ends the similitude with words of great import, which I could wish you would never forget: "*Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.*" Jesus Christ tell us to seek first of all the kingdom of heaven, that is, eternal life, and His justice, that is, grace, which is an indispensable means of obtaining eternal life. Jesus wishes

this and our own true good also demands it. Both faith and reason require that we should be above all things solicitous in seeking and procuring those goods which are both most necessary for us and in themselves most noble and excellent, a truth that is evident and needs no proof.

But in matter of fact what is the case? What do we see continuously on every side of us? It must be confessed that Christians for the most part, even those who should be an example to others, do just the contrary. Christ bids us "*to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto us*"; and they seek first "*these things,*" the things of time, hoping and expecting that the kingdom of God and His justice will be added to them. This is a confusion, an inversion of ideas; it is an ignoring of the Gospel teaching, to run after the miserable and perishable things of earth, as if these constituted our happiness, and to prefer them to the things of heaven, which alone are worthy of our love and of our best efforts. God generously promises us that, if we will turn to Him with our whole heart, He will give us over and above all the necessaries of life, and we disregard the promise and spurn the offer. He offers us, as it were, a barter, most advantageous to us, saying: "Think of Me and I will think of you; serve Me with mind and heart, and I will look to the needs of your body," and we shamelessly refuse to accept. We should never lose sight of the fact that the body is subordinated to the soul and that all things here below are means to an *end,* namely to

attain eternal life, but we invert the order of things, making the means an end, and putting the body before the soul.

Before ending the homily allow me to correct an erroneous impression which many, even good Christians, have, but which is not conformable to the teaching of the Gospel. In the Old Covenant God promised to the Hebrews who faithfully observed the Law, besides the rewards of heaven, an earthly recompense, namely, an abundance of this world's material goods. It would seem that some ill-instructed or thoughtless persons think that this promise of material goods is and should be extended to the law of grace, and they cite the words of Christ as a defense of their position. But this is an error to be sedulously avoided. In those words Christ says no more than that if we on our part do what we can and should and faithfully serve Him, each according to his gifts and state in life, *these things will be added unto us.*[1] But what are *these things* named by Our Lord? Read attentively this passage of the Gospel and you will see that they are the necessary *food* and *raiment,* but not riches; He promises the former, not the latter, and for the former we shall never want. Jesus Christ came on earth and preached the Gospel to all; He promised to His faithful followers, not honors or pleasures, or riches, or long life, or bodily health; on the contrary, He preached detachment from riches, He preached the spirit of poverty, mortification, love of labor, and

[1]It may also be observed that here Jesus Christ is speaking in a special way to His apostles, and that as their calling and condition were wholly extraordinary, so also was the promise.

He promised what was necessary, namely, food and raiment. And the great apostle bids us, when we have wherewith to sustain life and to clothe ourselves, to ask no more. *"But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content."*

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY V

BRETHREN: If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. And if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For every one shall bear his own burden. And let him that is instructed in the word communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things. Be not deceived: God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption: but he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the Faith.—EPISTLE, *Gal.* v. 25, 26; vi. 1-10.

THESE words of the Epistle are a continuation of those which I explained as best I could in the third homily, on the fourteenth Sunday after

Pentecost. As I then told you, the last part of this Letter to the Galatians treats wholly of morals, and sentence follows sentence with a copiousness, a clearness, and a force that excite our admiration. It should be noted, however, that these moral sentences or phrases are frequently not so interwoven, as if one were a consequence or a conclusion drawn from another; in fact many of them might stand wholly detached from their context, after the manner of a warning or an admonition. In closing his Letter the Apostle speaks as might an affectionate father writing to his far-away children; impelled by an ardent wish and desire for their good, he goes on giving them advice and counsel without heeding much the order and sequence of his words. What is nearest his heart is to remind them of what is most important and what he thinks most useful and necessary to them. Let us, as is our custom, go over, sentence by sentence, the words of the Apostle and comment upon them.

"*If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit.*" It is to be noted that St. Paul in the preceding verses divides Christians into two great classes, those who live according to the spirit and those who live according to the flesh. The former are those who, having received the gift of faith and the grace of God, live in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel, withstand the guilty passions of the flesh, and practise the virtues of their state; the latter are those who, though born again in Christ, indulge their passions and do those deeds of the flesh which St. Paul there enumerates.

St. Paul here seems to say: "I know that you

Galatians, having been taught by me to *live in the spirit,* are permeated with the great teachings of the Gospel, and that you wish to be true disciples of Jesus Christ; but if you are such you must give evidence of it by your works. It is all very well to believe in Jesus Christ and to have received His baptism, but this is not enough; you must also walk in the spirit, or do the works of faith." This truth is insisted upon over and over again in the Letters of St. Paul. Faith is necessary and without it it is impossible to please God, but faith alone is not enough; it must be vivified by works, which are, as it were, its clothing, its flesh and blood. There is, say, a tree growing in your field; it is living, it puts forth buds, and blossoms, and leaves, but will you be satisfied with knowing that it lives and that it is covered with flowers and a luxuriant foliage? Certainly not; you will also have it to bring forth fruit, and, if it does not, you will regard it as dead and cut it down and root it up from the soil. God does the same. He wills that we have faith, that *we live in the spirit,* but this is not enough; He wills also that we should produce fruit or do the works of faith: *"Let us walk in the spirit."* How many have faith and do not the works of faith! How many are baptized and live as Pagans? How many believe and profess the truths of the Creed, and do not observe the Ten Commandments! Let us not be of those whose life is one continuous contradiction.

Next follows a verse especially applicable to the Galatians, and yet not wholly inapplicable to ourselves. The Church in Galatia was in a turmoil

of confusion because of certain false teachers, who cast doubt upon the teaching and the mission of St. Paul and who wished to combine with the Gospel of Christ the laws and the ceremonies of Judaism; they were proud, arrogant men, who set themselves up as teachers and leaders of the Galatians. Against such the Apostle utters these words: *"Let us not be made desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another."* How delicately and charitably he expresses this admonition. He might have said: "Be not vainglorious," but instead he says: *"Let us not be made desirous of vainglory."* He includes himself among the number deserving reprehension, and the correction given to others he also addresses to himself, in order not to wound too deeply the self-love of his stubborn and wayward children. Let us imitate his prudence and charity, when in virtue of our office we find it necessary to correct our brethren or our children; let us, in as far as we can, spare their weakness and soften our reproof, in order thus to gain them.

What as a rule are the consequences of vanity? It irritates and angers; it excites the envy of those whom it offends. Let any one exalt himself above others because of his merits, real or fictitious, and show a disposition to look down upon them and to parade his excellencies; his vanity and ambition at once disgust them, leave a wound that rouses their scorn and indignation, and are the prolific source of ill feeling, envy, quarrels, and dissensions. They forthwith resolve to humble him and repel his vain pretensions. Rightly, then, does St. Paul bid us shun vanity and ambition, as a

means of closing the door against anger and envy and of preserving peace.

The Apostle wishing, before ending his Letter, to give some weighty and practical admonitions to the Galatians and to impress upon them how much at heart he had observance of them, as if unmindful of his dignity, begins with a word full of personal affection, addressing them all as *"Brothers."* How gracious and affectionate this term is when we consider that it was uttered by him who was by excellence *the* Apostle, and addressed to the faithful of Galatia, most of whom were poor, plain people. To the Pagans this language was new; they could not understand it; it was wholly at variance with their usages, their laws, and their beliefs; it was a light breaking through the darkness, announcing a new order of things, and laying the foundation of a new society. That holy word, *Brothers,* uttered then for the first time in the Pagan world,[1] little by little made its way round the earth, dissipating errors and prejudices and fixing deep in men's minds the principle of universal brotherhood, which is slowly but surely being realized. *"Brethren,"* says St. Paul, *"and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one."* We

[1]Paganism, knowing nothing of the common origin of men and of the common end to which they are called, knew absolutely nothing of the brotherhood of men. To a Pagan such a brotherhood was an absurdity, an insult to common-sense, and of this slavery was at once the consequence and the proof. Nor can it be said that the Hebrews had any adequate idea of such brotherhood, even though they possessed the true religion. The Hebrew idea of brotherhood was limited to their fellow countrymen; outside of Judaism they regarded all as enemies or strangers, but never as brothers. The idea of true and universal brotherhood was introduced by Jesus Christ.

are brothers, and as such we should love one another; now what does love, brotherly love, imply and demand? Love, if it be truly fraternal, wills, and must will, the good of our brethren, and must inspire us to remove from them whatever is injurious to them. To see a brother afflicted by some evil and to be able to free him from it, and not to do so, can not be conceived in one who truly loves him, any more than it is impossible to conceive of smoke without fire. Of the evils that beset our brethren the greatest certainly are moral evils, and hence it is from such that we should use every effort to free them. For this reason does St. Paul say to the Galatians: *"If a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct him,"* that is, you who live in the spirit should act according to the teachings and spirit of the Gospel; you should hold out a helping hand to a brother who has fallen, or is in danger of falling, lift him up, sustain him, aid, encourage, and cheer him, so that he may come safe out of the danger. But you will ask: How shall I do this? First of all by praying for him, by giving him good example; then by correcting him, by counseling, exhorting, and encouraging him, according as the circumstances peculiar both to him and to you demand. And how should we address a fallen brother or one in danger of falling, and in what tone of voice should our words be spoken? *"In the spirit of meekness,"* and our accent should be gentle, kind, affectionate, and inspired by true charity. And why? *"Considering thyself,"* says St. Paul, *"lest thou also be tempted."* That is, be affable and loving in correcting and admonishing your

brother, for you yourself may fall, as he has fallen, and may some day require that the same offices be exercised toward you that you now exercise toward him. Do to him, then, as you should wish that others would do to you in the same case, and you will certainly be gentle and indulgent with him.

Fraternal correction, my brethren, is a most grave duty incumbent upon us all, and yet the discharge of it is encompassed with many and serious difficulties. We are bound to correct our erring brethren when there are no others, who by office, or age, or character, or for other reasons, are still more bound than we; we are bound to correct them when there is a reasonable hope that the correction will bring them to amend their lives, and when by correcting them we shall not expose ourselves to dangers, animosities, and injuries so serious that we are justified in not incurring the risk of them. When, however, it is our plain duty to correct a brother, we should carefully consider the way to do it, the place, the time, and the circumstances, in order that it may be profitably done; we should exercise the greatest prudence and keep equally free from pusillanimity and from rashness. It is most difficult in practice to do just the right thing; and yet there is no end of directions prescribing how fraternal correction should be administered in order to accomplish its purpose. Taking St. Augustine for my guide, I shall reduce them all to one: "Love, and then say what you will; words which are seemingly offensive will never sound offensive, if your one thought and purpose is to free your brother by the sword of

the word of God from the evils that beset him."[1] When you admonish or correct a brother let your heart go out to him in love, a love that comes straight from God, who is all charity and only charity, and be assured that your words will find a way to his heart, will enlighten his mind, and make him docile and obedient, for your words will then be God's words.

Let us go on to the next verse, which still further enforces the law of charity: *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ."* What are these burdens which St. Paul exhorts us mutually to bear? They are the sins which we all commit, some more, some less; they are the defects common to us all; they are the offenses which we give one another, the annoyances which we cause one another, frequently without knowing it or intending to do so. Who is the man, be he ever so virtuous and holy, who has not his faults and failings, or who seems to us to have them, which amounts to the same thing? I have my faults and failings, and they are more numerous than I realize or am conscious of, and all you, who listen to me, have yours. Who will deny it, who can doubt it? What, then, are we to do, how are we to act? Shall we disregard the feelings of others and parade our shortcomings and weaknesses in their presence? This would only be to aggravate the evil and to make daily intercourse almost impossible. The better way and the way more conformable both to the precept

[1] "Dilige et dic quod voles, nullo modo maledictum erit, quod speciem maledicti sonuerit, si memineris senserisque te in gladio verbi Dei liberatorem hominis esse velle ab obsidione vitiorum."—St. Augustine, in hunc locum, apud À Lapide.

of the Apostle and to the dictates of worldly prudence, is mutually to tolerate each other, to bear with the failings and the faults of others in the hope that they may bear with and endure ours. You are, it may be, of an ardent temperament, impetuous, easily roused to anger, and you grow indignant because others are cold and unsympathetic; you are impatient with your brother because he is a spendthrift and squanders his money in feasting and enjoyment, and you are oblivious of the fact that you sin by excessive parsimony and niggardliness of soul; you find fault with your brother because he is not frank and open, and you do not reflect that you fall into the opposite fault of never knowing when to be silent. In the midst of these constant antagonisms, of faults and failings, which make us one a burden to another, what course is to be pursued if we wish to live peaceably in this world or to get on with the least possible friction? We must apply the precept of the Apostle, which is but a repetition of the precept of Christ: *"Bear ye one another's burdens."* I will bear with your defects, do you bear with mine. If families and men generally would observe this law, at once so simple and so practical, how many quarrels and misunderstandings, how many discords and enmities, and how much evil would be banished from the world! What harmony and concord of souls, what peace would flourish among us!

By thus mutually bearing with one another, says St. Paul, *"You shall fulfil the law of Christ."* What is this law of Christ to which reference is here made? Doubtlessly the Apostle refers to these words of the Saviour: *"This is My com-*

mandment, that you love one another"; and again: *"Love thy neighbor as thyself."* Whosoever sympathizes with his brother and bears with his faults shows that he has in his heart a love for him and that he fulfils the law proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

And here follows another sentence that still further enforces and explains what has thus far been said: *"For if any man thinketh himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."* In correcting your brother you should be gentle and charitable, for such is the will of Christ; if, on the contrary, you assume that you are better than he is, if you show pride, take on the airs of a master and a guide, if you deal harshly with him, if you are haughty and disdainful, you will accomplish nothing, your labor will be in vain, you will not gain your erring brother, he will be repelled from you and you will make a fool of yourself; while thinking yourself better than others, you will be but the victim of your own pride.

And in order that we may make no mistake in administering fraternal correction St. Paul gives us another rule which it is worth while considering attentively. *"Let every one prove his own work."* While admonishing my brother I ought to look to myself, lest perchance I, too, may be culpable and blameworthy, needing correction quite as much as he; and if I find that I fail just as does my brother, I ought at once to correct my failing; and this knowledge will make me more kind and indulgent toward him, since I, as well as he, have need of compassion and indulgence. In admonish-

ing a brother I ought carefully to examine my motives to see if, in correcting him, I am not impelled by vanity, or envy, or presumption, or ill-will, or by a desire to humiliate him; and I ought to strive to fulfil this duty toward my brother solely from love of him and from a desire to please God, but never with the purpose of gratifying some feeling that lies hidden in the heart, or from any evil and unworthy motive unbecoming a Christian. If inspired by and acting from such motives I feel somewhat of good in myself, I should thank God, who in His own time will give me the reward of it and the glory; but I should not boast of any good which my brother may do, who by my help has been recalled from his waywardness and put upon the road of virtue: *"So he shall have glory in himself, and not in another."* These are plain, practical truths, by which we all can and should profit daily.

Let us not forget, adds St. Paul, *"that every one shall bear his own burden."* What is this the Apostle says? Here is certainly a manifest contradiction. Just now he bade us bear one another's burdens and troubles: *"Bear ye one another's burdens,"* and now he tells us that each of us will have to bear his own burden: *"Every one shall bear his own burden."* Be not disturbed, my friends, the Apostle does not, nor can he, contradict himself. In the former passage he bids us bear each other's burdens and the annoyances we cause one another in this life, and to do so in all charity and with mutual forbearance, which is the offspring of charity; in the latter he tells us that in the life to come, before the tribunal of

Christ the Judge, each of us will have to bear his own burden and to give an account of all his works. It is needless to add that according to Christian teaching, of which St. Paul is by excellence the apostle, all our thoughts, and words, and deeds will be examined in the light of that infallible and irrevocable sentence, which Jesus Christ will pronounce at the death of each of us and which He will reaffirm at the end of time.

Let us again listen to our great teacher. Continuing he says: "*And let him that is instructed in the word, communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things.*" This admonition has no connection either with what goes before or with what follows; it stands by itself. Jesus Christ, in sending His apostles into the world to preach, told them that they should receive food and all things necessary from those to whom they announced the divine word, for the laborer is worthy of his hire; and if the minister of Jesus Christ gave spiritual goods, it was but just that he should receive in turn such temporal goods as were absolutely necessary to him. This truth is clearly set forth in the Gospel and is demanded by the very nature of things, and hence St. Paul here adverts to it. He says in effect: If you receive instruction from the sacred ministers, you should in turn give them enough of your temporal goods to enable them to live decently and as becomes their calling. St. Paul himself asked for nothing and said with a holy pride: "My own hands will provide for my temporal needs." He did not wish to be a burden to any one; and he declared that he would not permit any one to de-

prive him of this privilege. But the rule that he imposed upon himself, of providing for his wants with his own hands, was wholly voluntary and he could not make it a rule for others; and hence here, as elsewhere, he reminds the faithful of their duty to supply the ministers of the Gospel with what was necessary for their becoming support. In those early days of the Church, as was natural, the ministers of the Gospel lived from day to day on the voluntary offerings of the faithful, and these were never wanting. They do the same now in countries into which the Gospel is just being introduced. In fact the offerings of the faithful in the early Church were so abundant that there was enough to supply others who were in need. In our day and in this land, where the Church has been established for centuries, the needs of the ministers of religion are permanently provided for, so that no one suffers from want of food or clothing, and thus, while the dignity and independence of the clergy are secured, the faithful are not directly burdened. But if as things are, the sacred ministers have no need of your offerings to provide themselves with a roof to shelter them and the necessary food and clothing, the Church in which we assemble, which is the House of our Father and our House, is always in need of something, and it should be your glory to make it beautiful, to embellish and adorn it, so that it may be worthy both of God and of yourselves. May your hands be open and bountiful in contributing to the honor of God's House.[1]

Let us listen again to the Apostle: "*Be not de-*

[1]This passage refers to the Church in Italy.—TRANSLATOR.

ceived; God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." These words, if I mistake not, refer to the great doctrine set forth by the Apostle in the preceding chapter and explained in the third homily. He there says that in every man there are two great principles, the spirit or the grace of Jesus Christ, and the concupiscence of the flesh; and that from these two principles, opposed one to the other, come forth contrary works, the works of the spirit, which are good and holy, and the works of the flesh, which are bad and wicked. Recalling these truths and insisting on their importance, he uses these weighty words: "Heed what I say. Do not deceive yourselves, because God is not deceived, nor is He mocked, and should you attempt to deceive or mock Him you shall have only yourselves to blame and yours will be the penalty." And what is that concerning which we should not deceive ourselves? In telling us he employs a common similitude, but one that is always apt. Our life is a seed time. We sow in time, we reap in eternity. Now what do we reap? We reap what we sow. Do we sow good grain? If so we shall reap good grain. Do we sow bad grain? If so, we shall reap bad grain. Do we sow much? We shall reap much. Do we sow little? We shall reap little. The reaping will be in the measure and kind of the sowing. Now if a man sows in the flesh, that is, if his deeds are the deeds of the passions and of the flesh, and if he goes on com-

mitting sin after sin, there is no question but that the field of his soul will be covered with an accursed harvest, and that from the works of the flesh he will reap corruption and eternal death. And if, on the contrary, he sows in the spirit; if following the teaching of the Gospel and obedient to the voice of grace, his deeds are the deeds of the spirit, the field of his soul will be covered with a blessed harvest, and from it he will reap everlasting life. Substantially the Apostle says here what he says elsewhere, that *"God will render to every man according to his works."* He will give heaven and never-ending life to those who will have lived as Christians; and hell and eternal death to those who will have lived wicked lives.

The Apostle then draws for us the natural consequence of this teaching, namely: *"In doing good let us not fail."* We reap what we sow; let us, then, sow good seed; let us live, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. We shall encounter many and serious difficulties; crafty and powerful enemies will block the way; we shall be severely tried; we shall be tempted to turn back and follow the easy way of the flesh and of the passions. "Never!" cries St. Paul, "let us not weary of well-doing; let us not lose heart; let us go forward bravely and intrepidly along the path of virtue. While we yet have time and opportunity let us do good; do the works of the spirit, both for ourselves and for others." What good works should we do? All those that our state in life imposes upon us and to which our gifts and powers are equal. To whom should we do good? The Apostle tells us: *"Therefore while we have*

time, let us work good to all men.'' And must we do good to the Gentiles, to the stubborn Hebrews, to our enemies and persecutors? *To all,* says St. Paul; he makes no exception; he includes all men. Such is Christian charity.

And that we ought to do good to all men according to our means and opportunities is clear from the words that follow: *''But especially to those who are of the household of the Faith.''* If we should do good to all, and *especially* to those, who in common with us have the Faith, it is clear that even *non-believers,* are included in the word *all.*

My friends, I have finished; but permit me in bringing this homily to an end to make an observation, simple indeed but useful, namely, that the words of St. Paul, so precise and so clear, contain many valuable moral truths, and you should never forget the last two of those upon which we have meditated: *''In doing good let us not fail; for in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore whilst we have time let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.''*

HOMILY VI

At that time: Jesus went into a city that is called Naim: and there went with Him His disciples, and a great multitude. And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy toward her, He said to

her: Weep not. And He came near and touched the bier. (And they that carried it stood still.) And He said: Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited His people.—Gospel, *Luke* vii. 11-16.

At Capharnaum Jesus had restored to life the servant of the centurion and pronounced a splendid eulogy on this Gentile's faith and humility, which so far surpassed the faith and humility of the children of Israel. The next day He left Capharnaum and, taking the highway from Damascus to Jaffa, crossing the plain of Esdraelon, He went on toward the small town of Naim, or Nain, situated at the foot of Little Hermon, and distant less than two miles from Thabor and about twenty-eight from Capharnaum.[1] I shall never forget the morning of the twenty-first of October, 1894. I was on the summit of Thabor and looking toward the west I saw a small cluster of cabins. I asked the guide the name of the village; he told me it was Naim. At mention of the name I was silent; my thoughts went back to the Gospel narrative and to the miracle which took place there more than eighteen centuries before, and I fancied that I could see Jesus entering the village, followed by His apostles and by the multitude, and working the prodigy which I am about to explain. The site of the city was a beautiful

[1]Naim or Nain is now called Diebel-Dahy.

one, near the sources of the Kishon, and not without reason called *Naim,* or *Nain,* which means the *Beautiful.* Now it is only a miserable village inhabited by a few Arab families of shepherds. This was the spot chosen by Jesus to work one of His most stupendous miracles. You have just heard the story of this miracle, a story brief and clear as are all the records of the Gospel. For brevity and clearness there is no book ever written that compares with the Gospel, and, even humanly speaking, these characteristics are infallible pledges of its truth and sincerity. And now for the commentary.

"And it came to pass afterward that He went into a city that is called Naim; and there went with Him His disciples and a great multitude." What the Evangelist here relates is what constantly took place in all the journeys of Jesus through Palestine, from the day on which the apostles, after witnessing the catch of fish in the Lake of Genesareth, determined to follow Him for good and all. They went with Him everywhere, and, as the name of Jesus had now become famous and known to all the people, a great multitude also followed Him from town to town, from city to city, eager to listen to His words and still more eager to witness the miracles He wrought.

"And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a great multitude of the city was with her." Seemingly, judging from the narrative, the meeting was a chance one, but if, as we Christians firmly believe, nothing happens by chance and all things are dis-

posed and ordained or permitted by God for His own most wise ends, how can it be said that this meeting of Jesus at the gate was accidental? The meeting was intended by Jesus, and intended to take place at this precise spot. There was usually a large crowd about the gates of ancient cities, some coming in and some going out; and this was especially true of the Hebrews whose markets were at the gates of their cities, and not only their markets but their tribunals and courts also, and there causes were tried and justice administered. What forums were to the Romans the gates of their cities were to the Hebrews.[1] Jesus so arranged that He should meet at this most frequented place the funeral cortège of the young man, who had died in the flower of life. The Evangelist is careful to note that he was an only son and that his mother was a widow. The desolate and weeping mother followed the corpse, which was wrapped in a winding-sheet and carried by four men.[2] A great crowd joined the funeral procession, either because the deceased was of a rich and distinguished family, or because the early death of the young man and the grief of the unfortunate mother had excited their pity and, as is usual, had drawn them together to witness the sad and sorrowful spectacle.

I trust you will bear with me while I make an

[1]When it is borne in mind that the Hebrews had their tribunals, or held court and tried causes, at the gate of the city, it will be easy to understand certain expressions of the Books of the Old Testament.

[2]I see that Ruggero Bonghi (Vita di Gesu, p. 172) states that the dead young man had the face covered; Father Didon, Jesus Christ, vol. i, p. 346, says that the face was uncovered (*Visage decouvert*). Which of the two is right? I can not say.

observation in passing, which to me seems worthy your attention. A funeral is an occasion which should always evoke in us grave and solemn thoughts. The believer's thoughts naturally revert to the subject of death, to the deceased who is borne out to his last resting-place, to the grief of parents, relations, and friends, and to the never-ending life that begins beyond the grave; while the unbeliever thinks of the unknown, of the fear-inspiring, the insoluble, and desolating mystery before him. Whether we will or not, such thoughts arise in the mind of every man who thinks and feels; they make him enter into himself, they force him to reflect, they fill him with sadness, and make him serious and solemn; and these feelings manifest themselves in his words and acts, in his dress and general deportment. This is all as it should be; but instead of this what do we very frequently see? Unfortunately, and I say it with shame and sorrow, funerals, and especially the more imposing ones, are often little more than profane spectacles. There is neither silence, nor gravity, nor prayer; there is a lack of reverence even while the sacred rites are being performed; there is noise and confusion and the sound of musical instruments; there is levity of conduct; there is conversation as in a gathering of friends on a festive occasion; the head is not uncovered; there is dissipation, irreverence, and a profuse display of dress and worldliness; there is a frenzy to see and to be seen; and, may God forgive them, those who should have serious thoughts engage in irreligious conversation while the dead is being lowered into the grave. Such levity and thoughtless dissipa-

tion seem incredible in men and women who are almost gazing upon the face of death. And yet it can not be denied, such is the shameful exhibition which both you and I have often witnessed.

The son of the widow of Naim was borne outside the walls to be buried. It was the custom with the Hebrews, as with the Romans, to bury their dead outside the city, and this was, for many reasons that need not be enumerated, a wise custom. It will not be amiss to note here that the custom of disposing of the dead, prescribed by the Church, is most ancient, and was in use, not only among the Greeks and the Romans,[1] the Egyptians and the Hebrews, but amongst all known peoples and was regarded as in every sense the best. This manner of burying the dead has been regarded, as you know, by some scientific men of our day as objectionable, and they have attempted to introduce cremation in its stead. It is enough for us Catholics, obedient children of the Church, to know that she has solemnly condemned this usage and has forbidden the honor of Christian sepulture to those whose corpses are burned or cremated. And the Church has rightly, except in case of necessity, forbidden her children to burn or cremate the bodies of their dead. Natural piety even requires that we pay the greatest respect to the bodies of the dead; how, then, can we cast them into the flames and incinerate them before our eyes? Why not commit them to the earth, where the work of dissolution will go on slowly by the process of na-

[1]The custom of burning the corpses of the dead was unknown among the Greeks and Romans; it was introduced and became common later on under the Empire, and ceased entirely with the prevalence of Christianity.

ture? The sight of a body cast into the flames is revolting to the natural feelings and has a tendency to brutalize men. The very thought of it makes us shudder.

They tell us that the custom of burying the dead may be a source of contagion and a means of spreading infectious diseases; were this even true, cremation would not be necessary; but if the requisite precautions prescribed by law are taken there will not be the least danger in burying the dead, whereas cremation is always dangerous. The most distinguished physicians of France, England, and Germany have pronounced in favor of burial. But, my friends, there are quite other causes than cemeteries for infection and contagion in our cities and towns, that could and ought to be removed. If you wish to know the real reason for cremation and its purpose, it is sufficient to inquire and ascertain who are its defenders and promoters. With very few exceptions they are men wholly destitute of faith and its declared enemies, men affiliated with secret societies, who, by abolishing cemeteries, hope to do away with the sacred places in which faith is strengthened and religious piety kept alive.[1] No, we will not listen to

[1]The advocates of cremation appeal to the laws of hygiene; this is the Achilles of their arguments. It is impossible in a single homily to follow them in this field and solve all their difficulties. Any one who desires to see the subject thoroughly treated should read *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a periodical to which no exception can be taken. In the number of Feb. 15, 1890, there is an article by M. Jules Bochard, in which he clearly demonstrates with all sorts of arguments that cremation is difficult, dangerous, and sometimes impossible, and that burial is to be preferred. This article is a masterpiece and leaves nothing to be desired for any one who loves the truth and is not a slave to prejudice, and the periodical itself is certainly not suspected of a Catholic bias.

such teachers; we will follow the custom of our fathers in the Faith; we will obey the Church, our mother; we will bear our dear dead to the cemetery and there commit them to consecrated ground, where they will await the voice of God, calling them to a new and a better life. And now let us return to the Gospel narrative.

Jesus, together with the apostles and the crowd that accompanied them, arrived at the gate of Naim as a funeral procession bearing the bier of the dead young man was going out. When the two multitudes met there was, as is usual under such circumstances, some confusion, those of the one party asking those of the other, who they were, and what was taking place. The eyes of Jesus naturally fell upon the bier and upon the mother bowed in grief, the object of the commiseration of every one, and seeing her He was profoundly moved: "*Whom, when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy toward her, He said to her: Weep not.*" If all who saw the disconsolate mother were touched with compassion, how much more was the most tender heart of Jesus stirred with pity and sympathy! He went toward her; the crowd, recognizing Him, reverently drew back to let Him pass, the while amazed and repeating His name to one another, and all entertaining a confused hope of seeing Him work a miracle. When He stood beside the weeping mother He said to her in an accent of unutterable tenderness: "*Weep not.*" He may also have spoken other words of comfort, and, as St. Ambrose thinks, have promised her to raise her son to life; but even if He spoke only those two

words: "*Weep not,*" He uttered them, as only He could utter them, and they were sufficient both to comfort the afflicted mother, once she knew who He was, and to fill her with confident hope.

Having spoken these words, "*He came near and touched the bier, and they that carried it stood still.*" It was a solemn moment; the crowd in an instant was profoundly silent, those at a distance stood on tiptoe to get a view of what was going on, and all eyes were fixed on Jesus and on the bier. Owing to the reputation as a wonder-worker, which was now inseparably linked with the name of Jesus, every one anticipated and felt that something unusual, something great and wonderful, was about to take place. Touching the bier with one hand and, it may be, uncovering the face with the other, He said: "*Young man, I say to thee, arise.*" The dead at once sat up and began to speak. "*He that was dead sat up and began to speak.*" Let us pause here and consider every detail and every word of this miracle which is so briefly told.

Most of the miracles wrought by Jesus were wrought in answer to the prayers of others, but in this instance neither the mother nor any one else besought Him to recall the young man to life. In working the miracle He was impelled by His own heart and moved by the tears of the weeping mother: "*Being moved with mercy toward her.*" Neither did He utter a word before working the miracle, nor go through any preliminary ceremonies similar to those of Elias and Eliseus. He simply stopped the cortège, touched the bier, and in a voice implying that He was absolute Master of life and death bade the young man arise:

"Young man, I say to thee, arise." There was no uncertainty, there was neither act nor word, nor the slightest sign that indicated timidity or doubt. His words were words of absolute command: *"Young man, I say to thee, arise."* Was there ever a man who dared, or thought of daring, to use such language as this? Jesus touched the bier, and why? To show that the calling of the young man back to life was His work; that the life-giving virtue that poured into that corpse went out from Him, from His own person, as it is said elsewhere in the Gospel: *"Virtue went out from Him and He healed all."*[1] At these words: *"Young man, I say to thee, arise,"* the dead man at once roused himself, as if from a profound sleep, opened his eyes, sat on the side of the bier, and began to speak. The first person he saw was undoubtedly Jesus, who was holding his hand, and we can imagine with what stupefied surprise he looked up into His countenance, how he thanked Him, blessed Him, and in every way showed his gratitude. Jesus, still holding his hand and looking lovingly upon him, as upon His latest conquest, *"gave him to his mother,"* helping him at the same time to leave the bier. In this act of the Saviour presenting the young man, thus recalled to life, to his desolate mother, and as it were depositing him in her arms, there is a tender and exquisite delicacy that is very touching.

At sight of the dead man recalled to life the multitude was seized with fear, with a holy terror,

[1] "Tangit ut ostendat efficax esse suum corpus ad humanam salutem. Sicut enim ferrum igni adjunctum facit opus ignis et paleas ignis, sic caro Verbo unica vivificat."—St. Cyrillus Alex., apud À Lapide, in hunc locum.

as if realizing the presence of the Divinity, and unable longer to restrain its pent-up feeling broke forth into cries of joy and amazement, praising God who had so clearly manifested His power, saying: "*A great prophet is risen up among us and God hath visited His people.*" That is, *the Prophet* is come among us, the Great Prophet, the long-promised and awaited, and God has given us a magnificent proof that He is in our midst. What the people did afterward the Gospel does not say, but we can easily fancy that in a delirium of surprise, delight, and joy they cast themselves at His feet, professed their belief in Him, and bore Him away in triumph. But leaving all this, let us go back again to the miracle itself, and draw from it such considerations as the comments of the Fathers and the fact itself suggest.

As you know, there have been and there are men with a great reputation for knowledge, who, while honoring and even venerating Jesus as an incomparable genius and an unequalled moral teacher, do not believe in His miracles, and explain them, or try to explain them away, even the greatest of them (and certainly that of the raising of the son of the widow of Naim to life is one of these), as the result of purely natural causes. With regard to this fact or miracle two things are to be ascertained; first, the certainty of the material fact itself; and, next, can this material fact be explained solely by the forces of nature, or, in accounting for it, must recourse be had to the omnipotence of God.

Can the fact as narrated in the Gospel, be doubted? How can it be doubted? The narrator, regarding him only as one might any ordinary

writer, is worthy of being believed; he undoubtedly heard the fact from those, and there were many of them who had seen it with their own eyes; he wrote it down a few years after it took place; he tells us the city in which it happened; he designates the person recalled to life and also his mother, so that at that time any one wishing to do so could verify the truth of what he says; and this was all the more easy since those who witnessed it, or at least most of them, were then living. And how could a fact of this kind be invented? Even if it could, why should it be invented? What advantage could the writer derive from such a fabrication? Would he not fear that the fraud would be detected and that he would be humiliated, despised, and punished? And if he did not fear men, ought he not fear the anger of God for thus attempting to induce people to believe that an impostor was the Messias and a worker of miracles? And granting that he did wish to deceive his readers by narrating as a fact what never took place, the subterfuge employed would have been the worst possible to conceive, since the fraud could so easily be detected and its falsity so easily proved. If this fact could be doubted, then any fact could be doubted, and there would be an end of all historical certitude.

But is the fact such that it can not be explained as an effect of the forces of nature and must necessarily be ascribed to divine power? God alone can restore to life one who is dead and who is being borne away for burial, and this young man was assuredly, not only dead, but dead for some time. If he was not really dead he must have

been feigning to be dead, and then we must suppose that he was an impostor, that his mother was also an impostor, that her tears were hypocritical tears, and that all those, who took part in the shameless and sacrilegious comedy were impostors. And for what purpose and to serve whom did they become impostors? To serve the cause of Jesus Christ, who would then have been of all the most guilty. In that case there must have been a prearranged agreement between Him and the accomplices to the infamous conspiracy. What had His accomplices to hope from Him in thus becoming instruments of the fraud? They had nothing to hope from Him; they had everything to fear, first from God, and then from man, since it was so easy to lay bare the disgraceful conspiracy. Can it be supposed that none of the accomplices had a conscience? That they would all keep the secret? That nothing of what had happened would ever be revealed to the public and that everything would escape the vigilant eyes of the Scribes and the Pharisees, the powerful enemies of Christ? That the vast multitude present could be all deceived? Must it not be taken for granted, that, having witnessed the fact, they would have asked questions, made all sorts of inquiries, and set on foot a minute investigation to verify a stupendous miracle, that took place at the very gates of the city?

Still the death of the young man might have been apparent only. But could Jesus have known that his death was apparent? He met the funeral cortège coming out from the city and, as is clear from the text, He had never before seen the young man. And, not knowing that the death was only

apparent, which is very rare, how could He draw near to the bier, touch the corpse, and restore it to life? And if the young man was really dead, how could he expose himself to the scorn and derision of the public? And granting that the death was only apparent, would it have been sufficient to touch the body and call out to it? Could a touch or a call rouse the body and restore the young man to perfect health, there in the presence of the multitude? And were this the case would not a suspicion of fraud arise in the mind of some of those present, cause them to doubt and lead them to certify the fact? The multitude was most certainly convinced that a miracle had been wrought, otherwise they would not have cried out: "*A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people.*" But where is the use of wasting words in establishing the certainty of so splendid a miracle, which is recorded in the Gospel and which has been believed by millions and millions of Christians for more than eighteen hundred years? The belated and quibbling doubts of modern rationalists are scarcely deserving of an answer. Let us rather pass on to two observations, which to me seem useful, and with these we shall bring this homily to an end.

The Fathers observe that the Gospels leave us a record of three persons raised to life by Christ under quite different circumstances. The first was the daughter of the chief of the Synagogue, who had just died and whom He recalled to life in her home by prayer, in the presence of her parents and of the three beloved disciples; the second was the only son of the widow of Naim, of whom we read

in to-day's Gospel, who was raised to life on the roadside, in the presence of a great multitude, as he was being carried out for burial, not by prayer but by the word of authority, "*Arise*"; the third was Lazarus, recalled to life from the grave, four days after he had died, in the presence of a great number of persons, and among them many of the enemies of Jesus, who in a loud and commanding tone of voice said: "*Lazarus, come forth.*" Why did He employ these three different methods, each more solemn than the other, to recall those three dead persons to life? I might answer that so it pleased God, and that we have only to adore the secret counsels of His wisdom and of His will. Still we are not forbidden humbly and reverently to seek the reasons for His so doing.

My own opinion is that Jesus Christ in those three miracles, the greatest of their kind, the resurrection alone excepted, wished by their manifest gradation and variety to remove all doubt as to His power, and to clearly show that He was Master of life and death under every form and condition, whether in infancy, youth, or manhood, whether within doors, on the public highway, or at the grave. Had the three persons been recalled to life in precisely the same way and under the same conditions, the facts would have been equally miraculous and equally certain, but they would have lacked that variety which adds to their splendor. Moreover in these three restorations from death to life the Fathers see shadowed forth a teaching of the highest moral importance. The death of the body is a figure of the death of the soul by sin, and as a consequence the recalling of

the body again to life is an image or a figure of the raising of the soul to life through grace. The daughter of the chief of the Synagogue, recalled to life immediately after death, represents those sinners who, as soon as they have fallen, rise again; the son of the widow of Naim is a figure of those sinners who live for a long time in sin, then enter into themselves, are converted, and return to life; Lazarus, who was already laid away in the grave and whose body was fetid and offensive, represents those inveterate sinners who are wallowing in the filth of sin, whose conversion seems hopeless, and who at the call of Christ live again to grace. There is no sinner, though he be covered for years and years with the defilement of shameful sins as with a leprosy, though he be already on the very brink of hell, who by God's grace may not, if he will, escape from the bondage of sin and save his soul. What is the ordinary means employed by Jesus Christ to raise those dead in sin to a life of grace and to save them? Take this well to heart, my friends, for it is a matter of great importance. It is ever and always Jesus Christ, and He alone, who recalls those who are dead, either in body or in soul, to life again. But how and why was He moved to recall to life the three dead of whom the Gospel gives us an account? He was moved to restore the first to life by the tears of her parents; He was moved to restore the second to life by the tears of the widowed mother; He was moved to restore the third to life by the tears of his sisters. In each case it was the tears of kinsfolk, of relations, of a mother, that constrained and, as it were, forced Him to snatch

from the hand of death those three corpses; so also it is the tears of parents, of kinsfolk, of brothers, of a mother, and above all of our great mother the Church, by which the conversion of sinners is obtained. My friends and children, let us ceaselessly pray to Jesus Christ for poor sinners, whose number is beyond count; let us weep over their spiritual death, and Jesus who is life itself, will finally be moved to mercy by our tears, and by His infinite power will recall those unfortunate souls to a life of grace, a life incomparably more precious than the life of the body.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY VII

BRETHREN: I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you: which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His spirit with might unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God. Now to Him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to Him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end. Amen.—EPISTLE, *Eph.* iii. 13-21.

ST. PAUL lived three years, from 54 to 57, in Ephesus, a well-known city of Asia Minor, and there founded a flourishing Church, later on governed by the apostle St. John. He went from there to Jerusalem, where he was imprisoned by Felix and subsequently by Portius Festus, and having appealed as a Roman citizen to the tribunal of the Emperor Nero, was thence conducted to Rome. Arriving in Rome, as we learn from the

Acts of the Apostles,[1] he remained there two years, exercising his apostolic ministry as best he could among those with whom he came in contact. According to an ancient and venerable tradition, he abode while there in a house on the site of the present church of *Sta. Maria in via Lata,* on what is now the Corso, in the very heart of modern Rome. From that prison, where he was allowed considerable liberty, he wrote several Letters, known as the Letters of *Captivity,* and one of these is the Letter to the Ephesians, from which are taken the verses just read for you. This is one of the most difficult Letters, both because of the depth of the subject-matter, and of the conciseness and ruggedness of the style; the phrases, too, are half Hebraic, and the digressions sudden and bold.[2] This Letter differs from all his others in this, that there is in it no reference to questions concerning Judaism, but instead he warns the Christians of Ephesus against the empty teachings of the philosophers, then widely diffused among them. And now let us turn to our commentary.

St. Paul after telling his neophytes that the calling of the Gentiles was in a special way committed to him, the least of the faithful, and that he had preached the great mystery of Christ, and had boldly proclaimed it even in Rome, adverts to a

[1]Chap. xxvii, toward the end.

[2]See the beautiful volume of Canon L. Arosio entitled, The Fourteen Letters of St. Paul. This is certainly in every sense a work of merit, and would of itself prove that there are still those who are devoted to serious Biblical studies. Had this work appeared in England or Germany, or even in France, it would have sufficed to make a splendid reputation for its very diligent author.

difficulty, which might be a scandal to those recently converted Christians; namely, that because of the Gospel he had been exiled, persecuted, and cast into prison. To remove this scandal from those who had but just given up Paganism and embraced Christianity, he says: "*I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you,*" as if he would say: "You have received from me the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you have welcomed me among you, and you have believed me to be His apostle, and now seeing me made the object of so much hatred and anger, so furiously mistreated in Jerusalem, and detained in prison here as a malefactor, I would not have you lose heart, or be discouraged, or be tempted to give up your faith, because it may seem to you impossible that the omnipotent God should so forsake His apostles and His Church and permit them to be the sport of wicked and implacable enemies. No, be not discouraged because I have been made to suffer these trials for your sakes and for the faith you now profess: *I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you.* Instead of being cast down, disheartened, and ashamed at seeing me thus ill-treated and defamed, you should rather glory in it and rejoice: *Which is your glory.* Far from feeling yourselves humiliated in seeing me, your teacher and father, thus fiercely harassed and made as it were the very sweepings of the earth, you should lift up your heads and be proud of it." What elevation of thought! What sublimity of language! St. Paul repeats in his own case what his brother apostles did in theirs, who, after being publicly scourged in Jerusalem, went forth rejoicing that

they had been deemed worthy to suffer for Jesus Christ.

I am quite well aware, my friends, that in these days there are those, and among them even good Christians, who appear to think that the Gospel and the spirit of Christianity have undergone a change since the days of the apostles. They would seem practically to take it for granted that, because Christ triumphed over Judaism and Paganism and set up His Kingdom from one end of the world to the other, they, being His followers and His ministers, should receive only honors and homage, rank and wealth and an abundance of the goods of this world, and if they do not, they are surprised, they complain, they are scandalized, they can not be resigned, and they almost suspect that Christ has failed of His promises. Why should this be? Do they forget the example of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross? of the apostles, who suffered all manner of privations and the most atrocious martyrdom? of all the saints, who followed in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and of His apostles? Do they forget the words of Jesus Christ, repeated in a hundred passages of the Gospel: *"If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you;" "If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, much more them of His household;" "He who will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me"?* Do they forget the terrible words of St. Paul: *"All who will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution"?* Do they think that Jesus Christ came into this world that they might live in ease and pleasure, that they might enjoy

the honors and the glory of this world? To say so would be to transform the Gospel into the Mosaic Law, to destroy outright the example and teaching of Jesus Christ, who came to minister and not to be ministered unto, who by choice took for Himself poverty, humiliations, and the death of the cross. Away, then, with those who would pervert the Gospel of Jesus Christ and enjoy here on earth the happiness which the divine Master promised us only in heaven: "*Rejoice and be glad when they revile and persecute you, because your reward is great in heaven.*"

We have wandered from our commentary; let us now return to it, and listen to the words of St. Paul, who assures the Galatians that, "*For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*" That is, for your sakes, that you may not be disheartened at seeing my afflictions, but rather that they may be your boast and comfort, I humbly prostrate myself before the infinite majesty of God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Why does St. Paul say that he prostrates himself before the Father, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity? Could he not have said that he prostrates himself before the Son or before the Holy Ghost? Certainly he could have said so, the three divine Persons being perfectly equal and inseparable the one from the other, and the honor given to one being given equally to each of the others, because of the identity or oneness of their nature; but the Apostle wished preferably to name the Father, because in the order of origin the Person of the Father is first, and is the root and fountain of the Son, and together with the Son, is the

root and fountain of the Holy Ghost, and hence in naming the Father, he necessarily indicates the Son, and also the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from both. St. Paul in spirit prostrates himself before the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the very naming of the Father evokes in the fervid mind of the Apostle another and analogous idea, which calls up a host of thoughts to which he can not help referring in passing and which he sets himself briefly to explain. He says, referring to the Father: "*Of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.*" What is the meaning of these words? As the Father, through the generation of the Son, is the Principle without a principle of the Son, and with the Son, through spiration and love is the Principle without a principle of the Holy Spirit, so from Him, as from a supreme and eternal exemplar, the principles of all created things are derived. He does not say, notes St. Jerome, that all paternity is born of God the Father, but that it takes the name of Him, or is constituted by Him, both in heaven and on earth.[1] In heaven, outside of God, there are only angels and saints, and there is there no generation properly so called; but the minds of the angels as of the saints have an order of principle as to their thoughts, their knowledge, and their love; in heaven the angels, belonging to the superior orders, are as principles of light and love relatively to those of inferior orders; on earth men, inasmuch as they are fathers and give life to children, reflect the

[1] "Ex quo omnis paternitas nominatur, non vero nata est. Aliud est enim appellationem paternitatis mereri, aliud naturæ habere consortium" (Apud À Lapide).

infinite paternity of God, the Father; and hence, in a most true sense, that infinite and eternal paternity, which is perfected in the heart of the divine Life, is marvelously and luminously reflected in the likeness of all creatures, material and immaterial, in heaven and on earth: "*Of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.*"[1] The vastness and sublimity of the conception are worthy the great apostle.

There prostrate before the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the perennial fountain of all paternity in heaven and on earth, what does St. Paul do? Whosoever prostrates himself before God adores and prays, and so, too, does St. Paul; he prays God that, "*according to the riches of His glory,*" that is, by reason of his exuberant and glorious grace, "*they may be strengthened by His Spirit.*" Or in other words St. Paul says to the Galatians: "I am well aware that the knowledge and the sight of my afflictions and humiliations are a most serious trial to you and a source of scandal, and hence have I besought God that in the abundance of His grace He will powerfully strengthen you with His Spirit, so that you may bear up under the trial and come victorious out of it." And this strengthening force has no reference whatever to the material force of body, of arm, or muscle; it refers solely to the force of mind and will; and it is given that they may be

[1]Philologists observe that the word *paternitas* in the Vulgate, in Greek, is πατρια, or *fatherland,* and means *family,* and in a wider sense, *race, people, nation,* etc. Here the word *paternity* is used in the sense of *principle*—relatively to that which is referred to it; in this sense one is said to be the father of his country, the father of poetry, of music, etc.

made strong to cling firmly to the truths they have received and to live a life conformable to them. A man may be very strong in strength of body and very weak in strength of soul; and, conversely, he may be very strong in strength of soul and very weak in strength of body. To take an instance, a Sister of Charity, say, leaves her home and friends, she refuses honorable marriage, takes passage, and is borne away into a strange land; she lives for years and years in a climate that is a perpetual menace to health and life, attending the sick or caring for and teaching abandoned orphans, ready and willing to die for the Faith by the sword of the executioner. She is a woman weak indeed in bodily strength, but strong in spirit. Again, here is a man in the flower of his years, full of life and vigor, but he can not resist the seductive charms of some young woman, he forgets or spurns his marriage vows, he squanders an ample fortune, he indulges in every pleasure, he neglects his children, he can not bear to have any one chide or advise him, he gives free reign to his tongue, he denies himself no gratification. Such a man may have great strength of body, but in spirit he is weak and feeble. It is strength of mind that makes men great and virtuous; but of what use is strength of body? One may be as strong as an ox, as agile as a tiger, as big as an elephant, but all this does not add an iota to his dignity as a man.

The Apostle asks God the Father for another favor for his well-beloved Ephesians, namely, that Christ may abide in their hearts by faith: "*That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts.*" This

expression needs some explanation. Did St. Paul, in praying that Christ might dwell in the hearts of his children by faith, mean that He might abide there as He does when we receive Him in holy communion? By no means; His presence then within us is sacramental and real. What, then, is meant by this abiding of Christ within us by faith? *Faith,* as here used, means the truths of faith, as taught by Jesus Christ. When the truths taught by Jesus Christ take possession of our minds, when we believe them firmly, when we cling to them tenaciously, and make them the rule of our conduct, then through these truths and in them Jesus Christ Himself dwells within us. When the light of the sun falls upon an object and illuminates it, do we not say that the sun is there? When a man professes to be a disciple of any philosopher, no matter of whom, say of St. Thomas, do we not say that that man carries St. Thomas in his head or in his mind? Do we not read of St. Cecilia that she *carried the Gospel in her heart,* that is, that she kept constantly in her heart the teaching of the Gospel? So you see, my friends, how great and exalted is the dignity of a true and loyal Christian; by believing firmly the teaching of Jesus Christ he in a true sense bears Jesus Christ about within him; Jesus Christ illuminates him, is the guide of his life, the inspiration of his thoughts and affections: *"That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts."*

Nor does St. Paul stop here; he prays God the Father to strengthen his children of Ephesus; he prays that Jesus Christ may abide in their minds

and hearts by faith, and finally he prays that they may be rooted and founded in charity: "*That being rooted and founded in charity.*" As you know, my friends, we may profess the Faith pure and undefiled, and yet be destitute of charity; we may believe all the Creed teaches, and our works may contradict our belief. How many believe and live not according to their belief; how many have faith and do not the works of faith? What good is faith without works, or without charity, or the love of God, moving men to put their faith into deeds and to make it real and living, "*the faith that works by charity*"? It is absolutely no good, it is their condemnation. And hence does St. Paul pray God that his beloved Ephesians may not only have Christ dwelling in them by faith, but also and pre-eminently by charity; that they may be deeply rooted and well grounded in charity; for only by the charity that inspires and leads on to works, will Christ dwell perfectly in them and make Himself one with them. Strive then, my friends, to make Christ yours, to have Him abide in you, not by faith alone, but also by charity; profess the Creed but observe the Commandments; to faith join good works, and you will be, as St. Paul elsewhere says, not hearers of the word only, but doers also.

By doing this you will gain another, and a considerable advantage, of which St. Paul tells us in these words: "*That you may be able with all the saints to comprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth.*"[1] The four dimen-

[1]The words *scire etiam*, to know also, are, I think, but a repetition of the word *comprehendere*, to comprehend, of the preceding verse. Then the sense is clear and natural.

sions of bodies are here used to express all the measureless greatness of charity, and to make the Ephesians know and comprehend it, as it is known and comprehended by the angels and saints in heaven.[1] This charity, says St. Paul, transcends all knowledge, which is equivalent to saying: Who can ever adequately comprehend the charity that led Christ to suffer and to die for us? This charity of Christ is above and beyond all human knowledge and all the knowledge of the angels and saints in heaven. It has no bounds, either of width, because it embraces all men of whatever race, or rank, or condition; or of length, because it includes all time; or of height, because it transcends all perfection; or of depth, because in its ardor it embraces all and loves all, in heaven and on earth, both men and angels.

In the next verse St. Paul concludes the enumeration of the goods which he prays God to grant to his Ephesians, putting them all into a phrase, Hebraic in form and quite usual with him: "*That you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*" God is the fulness of all good and of all perfection, as faith and reason teach; and whatever we have, or whatever we can possibly have, all comes to us from Him, and we receive all from His fulness, as St. John says: "*Of His fulness we have all received.*"

[1]No one can comprehend the charity of Christ, this being infinite; and hence in this phrase of St. Paul, *to comprehend* should be taken in a wide sense, meaning *to know*, as it is said immediately after, *to know also*. Some, interpreting these four divisions, have given so many and such diverse explanations of them that we must admire their fecundity and possibly also their eccentricities. Suffice it to say that they have even discovered in those four divisions the *four arms* of the cross to which Christ was affixed!

Any one who attentively reads the writings of St. Paul and meditates upon them, will easily perceive in them a peculiarity, not uncommon with him. When in his unpolished, harsh, and almost fierce fashion, he writes down some powerful phrases, some great and fertile idea, he seems to lose sight of the thread of his reasoning, always vigorous and compact, and to be wholly absorbed in this idea, to be carried away with it, to follow it up, to develop it, and to try to make it clear and luminous. It is a style characteristic of men of highly gifted intellects and warm hearts, who, when truth dawns upon them, are in spite of themselves fascinated by it and enamored of it. Something of this sort happened to St. Paul, after he had written the sentence already quoted: "*That you may be filled with all the fulness of God.*"

Kneeling in the presence of God, of the majesty of the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom comes all fatherhood in heaven and on earth, he prays fervently, earnestly to Him to strengthen his children and to reign in their hearts through faith and charity; he prays that they may know the measureless length and breadth, height and depth of this charity of Christ, that surpasses all understanding, and that they may be filled with the fulness of God; and, while praying, the eye of his mind, illuminated from on high, looks away into the ocean of the divine perfection, contemplates that infinite Being, that center and source of all good, that gives out and yet loses nothing, and, as if carried out of himself, in an ecstasy of gratitude, adoration, and love, he cries out: "*To*

Him, who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, to Him be glory." This sublime hymn, full of true and exalted poetry, is the crown and complement of the good wishes and prayers that he offered up to God for his children, and in the words: "*Who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand,*" is revealed the intimate knowledge the Apostle had of God and the limitless trust he placed in his power and goodness.

We can give nothing to God because He has all things and we have nothing of our own; nevertheless, endowed as we are with the great gift of liberty, which we can use as we will, we can feel pleasure in the perfections of God, we can be glad that He has them, and we can say to Him that, were it possible, we would wish to increase them; we can say to Him that we wish and desire to exert ourselves to have all the free wills of men render Him the love and homage that are due Him, and which constitute that external glory which is a faint reflection of that which He has in Himself and which no one can either take from Him or diminish; and we can say with St. Paul: "To Thee, O Lord, be glory;" and this is precisely what Jesus Christ in the *Our Father,* that most excellent of all prayers, teaches us to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

To the words: "*To Him* (God) *be glory,*" the Apostle adds these: "*In the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end.*" All creatures are like unto mirrors, more or less

bright and clean; mirrors receive the light of the sun, reflect it back, and, as we should say, increase it, and in a sense show forth the glory of the sun; so also are creatures images, mirrors of the divine perfections, each according to its nature, and, without adding to these perfections, they reflect them, and in a way make them known and increase them by augmenting their imitations. They give glory to God, and the greater the excellence and perfection of the being that gives the glory, the greater will the glory itself be. This being granted, my friends, you understand that the Church is the most stupendous creation, the most perfect work, that ever came from the hands of God, and far surpasses the creation of the universe, because the universe is a kingdom of matter, of corporeal things, whereas the Church is a kingdom of spiritual things, of minds, and of intellects, and hence she should show forth the glory of God above all His other works. Above the Church, again, is her head, the Man-God, Jesus Christ, who embodies in Himself all the perfections of heaven and of earth. He is the masterpiece of the Father's omnipotence and wisdom, of His justice and mercy, and in Him He finds the object of His infinite complacency; in Him His external glory touches its supremest height, so that not even He Himself, omnipotent as He is, could conceive or produce a greater work.

Rightly therefore does St. Paul, in language full of truth and poetry, cry out: *"Glory to God . . . in the Church, and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, world without end. Amen."*

HOMILY VIII

AT THAT time: When Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath-day, to eat bread, they watched Him. And behold there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? But they held their peace. But He, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, He said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day? And they could not answer Him to these things. And He spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him, and he that inviteth thee and him, come and say to thee: Give this man place: and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place: but when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at the table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—GOSPEL, *Luke* xiv. 1-11.

JESUS had quitted Galilee for the last time and had turned His steps toward Jerusalem to consummate His sacrifice there. In Galilee they

had said to Him: *"Depart and get Thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill Thee,"*[1] and He, not because He had any fear, but because He wished to fulfil the designs of Providence, set out on the road to Jerusalem, most likely traveling along the shores of the lake and the banks of the Jordan. While on this journey, and about three months before His death, the miracle recorded by St. Luke and read in to-day's Gospel was wrought. The Gospel does not mention the name of the city or town where it took place, nor is this necessary, for it is less important to know the place and time than to know the things that Jesus did and said, these being for our instruction.

The passage of the Gospel read for you may be divided into two parts; in the first is narrated the miracle wrought on the man that had the dropsy; in the second is contained a very short parable, or to speak more precisely, a most simple but useful bit of moral teaching; I trust you will all listen with your usual attention to the explanation of both.

Jesus was leaving Galilee, so dear to Him, where Herod had threatened His life, and was on His way to Jerusalem, the home of His most implacable enemies and the place in which He was to consummate His awful sacrifice. He knew all things with clearness and certainty, for how could it be otherwise, He being the Son of God? There were enemies behind Him, enemies before Him, enemies to the right of Him, and enemies to the left; only a few disciples followed Him; only a few of the plain people listened to Him; the rich,

[1]Luke xiii. 31.

the learned, and the powerful heeded Him not; on the contrary, they hated and persecuted Him. After three years of toil and privation, of miracles and teaching, He had gathered but a meager harvest. Another would have been discouraged and, in the presence of so many obstacles and confronted by so many powerful enemies, would have given up all as lost, but not so Jesus; He suffered and wept, it is true, but He still courageously and intrepidly went forward with His work, sowing the seeds of truth and scattering miracles in His path, everywhere healing the sick and giving the suffering tokens of His love.

"And it came to pass when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath day, to break bread, that they watched Him." As is clear from the whole Gospel, the Pharisees were the principal and the most malignant of the enemies of Jesus Christ, and still they invited Him to dine, and He accepted their invitation, either because He wished to give them an example of meekness and charity toward the malevolent, or because He wished to instruct them and to enlighten with the light of truth minds darkened by pride and hearts filled with hatred. The day for which He had accepted the invitation was the Sabbath and this is noted by the Evangelist, to explain both the fact that took place and the words spoken by Christ; and the one who invited Him was a leading man among the Pharisees, either because of his wealth, his dignity, and name, or of some other title to distinction which we do not know. It is clear from the context that the setting of the invitation for the Sabbath, and

having the meal in that particular house, were both part of the plot contrived by the malicious Pharisees.[1]

The prescription of the Law, making the Sabbath a day of rest, was very severe, but the Pharisees, who followed the letter of the Law rather than its spirit, had made this prescription ridiculously rigorous and insupportable, as we have noted elsewhere. They were laying their plans to entrap Him, if possible, on the subject of the observance of the Sabbath, this being a law well known to the people, of which they were most jealous, and the non-observance of which they insisted on punishing severely. What did the Pharisees do? Suddenly they set before Our Lord a man afflicted with dropsy; they did this, without saying a word to Him, on purpose that the sick man might meet Him just as He was about to enter the house of the Pharisee. The poor man could not help appealing to Jesus, if not by word, at least by his attitude and by exhibiting the effects of the sickness with which he was afflicted. The Pharisees knew from experience that at sight of this unfortunate man, begging by word and gesture to be healed, the Heart of Jesus would be moved to pity, that He would restore him to health, and that, in consequence, they would have an opportunity of accusing Him of transgressing the Law. Jesus, seeing before Him the afflicted man pleading for mercy, stopped, and so also did the Pharisees; all eyes were upon Him to see what He

[1]The Gospel says that Jesus Christ was invited *to eat bread*. This I translate *to dine*. The Hebrews say *to eat bread*, meaning the whole meal, as we ourselves say: "Come and take a bite with me, or a plate of soup." The part is taken for the whole.

would do, all ears were open to hear what He would say, and if possible to find either in His deeds or in His words matter of accusation against Him: "*They watched Him.*"

We can not help pleading guilty to a most just feeling of indignation against those Pharisees, who cloaked their wicked designs against Jesus and their malignant hatred of Him under the appearance of esteem and good-will, even inviting Him to share their hospitality and to break bread with them. But are these hypocritical artifices uncommon in our day and among ourselves? How many call themselves our friends and profess to be such, are profuse in compliments and courtesies, and yet in their hearts despise and hate us, and, when it is safe to do so, speak ill of us, calumniate us, and strive to blast our good name? These are hypocritical Pharisees; shun and abhor them.

And on the other hand how is it possible not to admire the goodness and Godlike generosity of Jesus, who, while He read the hearts of those wicked men and knew their thoughts, accepted their invitations to dine, sat side by side with them at table, repaid their hatred with love, and let them see with the eyes of their mind the light of truth? In dealing with the malevolent and with those who are our enemies let us imitate the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ and take Him for our pattern.

No sooner had Jesus seen the man with the dropsy before Him, than He detected the deceit, and at once taking the offensive, brusquely put a question to the Scribes and Pharisees to which common-sense, which is worth more than all laws,

could permit but one answer to be given: "*Is it lawful,*" said He, "*to heal on the Sabbath day?*" What could they say? Had they replied: "Yes, it is lawful," the trap they had laid would have miscarried. Had they replied: "It is not lawful," they would have outraged common-sense and committed an act of brutal cruelty against the poor man suffering with dropsy, who was asking and awaiting, God knows how anxiously, to be healed. They were silent, not having either the modesty to admit that they were wrong, or the honesty to combat the truth and openly to contend that the stupid interpretation they put upon the Law of Moses was the right one. They were silent, in their confusion they looked from one to the other, but they were not vanquished, and they treasured up in their hearts the shame and the humiliation of this discomfiture. And here, again, we see to what lengths passions that are not subdued and kept under control can lead men. These Pharisees could not help seeing all the force and all the evidence of the truth that Jesus Christ set before them; they did see it and realize it, and were in consequence reduced to silence. Still they continued obstinate in their hatred of Him and in their foolish interpretation of the Law, as regards the rest it prescribes for the Sabbath. They were furious, but, while concealing their feelings, they refused to surrender to the truth. My friends, let us be on our guard against any passion whatever; for once we bend our neck to the yoke, we know not whither it will hasten us. Little by little a veil will fall over our eyes so dense that we can see nothing, and then it may be we shall call error

truth, and truth error. We have the Pharisees as an example.

Then Jesus, taking the miserable man who had the dropsy, healed him and sent him away: "*Taking him He healed him and sent him away.*" Apparently He did not utter a word; He took him by the hand and instantly healed him by His omnipotent touch, and addressing to him words breathing love and tenderness sent him away restored to health, happy and rejoicing.

I shall not here spend words moralizing on the miracle wrought on the man healed of the dropsy, as many of the Fathers have wisely done, and interpreters, also, who have followed in their footsteps. As St. Augustine says, they see in the dropsical man a figure of a covetous man. Like the dropsical man, the covetous are puffed up because of their riches; like the dropsical man, who, though swollen up, is always crying for water and can not extinguish his thirst, and who by a disarrangement of the stomach converts everything into water, the avaricious, though rich and more than rich, never say "enough"; they toil and drudge to increase their wealth, converting everything into gold, and they are never satisfied. My friends, may this miserable passion of avarice, this shameful thirst for gold, never get possession of any of us. It would be a burden and a shame to us, as was his infirmity to the dropsical man, who bore it about with him everywhere and could not conceal it.

Those Pharisees and rigorists, who, on seeing the man with the dropsy instantaneously healed, should have opened their eyes and surrendered

themselves to the voice of God and of truth, should have confessed that they were wrong and acknowledged Jesus Christ as the true interpreter of the Law, should have fallen at His feet, craved His pardon and believed in Him, were obstinately and haughtily silent: *"They held their peace."* When we reflect on the conduct of the Pharisees in the presence of the clearest truth and in spite of a stupendous miracle, we can understand what men, dominated by passion, are capable of, and to what excesses and crimes they may be driven in their madness and delirium; among a thousand proofs of this truth the example in the Gospel of to-day is neither the least nor the most striking. We may see the truth, we may be convinced of the impossibility of denying it, but passion rules and refuses to yield. What blindness! It was not against the Law to walk on the Sabbath, nor to converse, nor to move the hands; all this even the Pharisees did, and what more did Jesus do than to touch the man with the dropsy and speak to him? Why was this much a violation of the observance of the Sabbath in Jesus and not in the Pharisees? Who can account for this contradiction and this malignity? There is only one thing that accounts for it, the passion of hatred and the passion of pride.

Jesus read their thoughts and seeing that they were still obstinate, He turned and spoke to them a parable, the argument of which was clear and one that all could understand: *"Which of you,"* He said, *"shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?"* The argument was one that could

not be evaded. "I," says Christ, "by a word healed this dropsical man, and in your hearts you pronounce Me a violator of the Law, because to-day is the Sabbath; but if to-day your ox or your ass should fall into a ditch you would not hesitate to draw it out, and you would not believe that in doing so, you are violating the Law. Now tell me, which of us would labor the more, you in rescuing your animal or I, in healing the dropsical man? Or is your ox or your ass of greater worth in your estimation than is a man, so that it is lawful to do for either of them what it is not lawful to do for him?" The Gospel says that those Doctors, and Scribes, and Pharisees could not answer a word: *"And they could not answer Him to these things."* But did they submit to the truth? Did they confess that they were wrong? Impossible; their pride would not permit it, they were silent and unable to reply; they fumed inwardly and resolved to wait for another occasion to be revenged for the shame they suffered.

The Gospel narrative seems to imply that the miracle was performed on the dropsical man either outside the house, or certainly before the guests were seated at table, but this is a matter of little consequence.

There were likely a great many guests at the dinner, for the host was one of the leading Pharisees and the occasion was not an ordinary one. It would seem that Jesus on entering the banquet-room had noticed that one of the guests showed a disposition to sit down in the place of honor; it was a boyish vanity, but it showed how proud and ambitious they were and how deeply rooted was

their love of precedence. When they were seated, likely toward the end of the meal, and when all were waiting to hear Jesus speak, He began by referring to what He had observed on entering the room:[1] *"When thou art invited to a wedding,"*[2] He said, *"sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited, and he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee: Give this man place, and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place."* The object of Jesus was to teach those vain lawyers and Pharisees to be modest and humble, employing in doing so His usual incomparable method of teaching, that is, clothing truth in simple and familiar images, and in this instance, being at table, He made the circumstance serve His purpose. The customs observed at banquets in those days did not differ from those observed in our own, and they are such as social proprieties require. There are, of course, differences to be observed in assigning guests their places at table, each being given the place corresponding to his dignity or to his personal qualities. Suppose now that a guest on entering a banquet-hall goes straight to the top of the table and takes the place of honor, and that the host, coming in with a more distinguished guest, goes to him and politely says: "Be good enough to rise and give this place to this gentle-

[1]We read in the Gospel: *"He spoke a parable also to them that were invited."* But as a matter of fact Jesus does not here make use of a parable; sometimes, as in this place, *parable* is taken in a wide sense to mean a sententious precept or useful maxim.

[2]Wedding here means not only the banquet that is the usual accompaniment of a wedding, but in general any *banquet* whatever.

man;" will he not be filled with confusion and shame on being obliged to give up the place of honor and to take a seat lower down? His shame is but the penalty justly due to his ambition. But suppose, on the contrary, that on entering the room he had taken the lowest seat at table, and that the host, coming in and seeing him in a place inferior to his rank or deserts, goes to him and taking him by the hand, says: "My friend, come up higher," will he not be honored in the presence of all the guests and receive the reward which his modesty deserves? Let us, then, be modest and humble, and not put ourselves forward, for only such receive the honest tribute of true respect and honor.

Here some one may put a difficulty which the words of Christ seem to suggest. They will say: "What sort of modesty and humility is that which Our Lord counsels us to observe? Take the last place in order that you may be given the first; keep in the background in order that you may be brought more prominently forward; simulate humility in order that your pride may have a fuller swing. Is not such humility and modesty as this worse than worldly vanity and a most subtle form of pride?" Certainly it is, or would be, if Christ's words could be so understood, for He would then be, not a teacher of humility, but an advocate of pride. As you know, He sometimes advises us to imitate the children of this world, and even the wicked, not in their evil works, but in the foresight which they observe and in which they give us an example. Thus, He bids us imitate the unjust steward, who with the goods of his

master makes provision against his own future needs, but He does not counsel us to steal as the steward stole, as is clear from the fact that He calls him an "*unjust steward.*" Similarly here, Jesus does not bid us take the lowest place, that by so doing we may gain the highest and be praised by men, which would be most blameworthy; but He wishes to teach us, that as men in the world are modest in order that they may gain honor and esteem, so should we be humble and love the lowest places, not to be the observed of men, but of God, who will give us our reward in heaven. The advice of Christ may be put in this way: "When bidden to come to a feast, do not take the first place, but the last; and this not in the hope of being called later on to the first, but from a feeling of genuine modesty; if on the contrary you take the first place, you may have the shame of seeing yourself sent down to take the last."

The saints, who followed in the footsteps of Christ, have all in their lives exemplified this modesty. They have been one and all more desirous of being lowly and retiring than worldlings are of being prominent and holding the first places. Who can ever forget the beautiful description left us by St. Jerome of Eustochium and Paola? They were both very rich and noble Roman ladies, descended from a long line of consuls and senators and of famous conquerors. And yet the two ladies, taught in the school of Jesus Christ, lived as if they had been the most humble of maidens and had come of the most lowly stock. They lighted the fires, they swept the floors, they mended their own clothes and those of others, they

served at table, and day by day they performed all the ordinary household duties; and they did all this, not certainly to excite admiration and to gain the praise of being humble and modest, but from a profound sense of their own lowliness and to please Him, who being God, made Himself man and the poorest of men, and who being Master and Lord of all, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. This is the true humility taught in word and work by Jesus Christ.

The entire teaching of Jesus Christ in this discourse, which the Evangelists call a parable, is summed up in this admirable sentence: "*Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*" This is a great law running through all things and ruling all creatures, rational and irrational, both in the natural and supernatural orders, and which Jesus Christ willed should be verified in Himself. Would you, says St. Augustine, erect a building lofty and secure? Begin by digging the foundation deep and wide. Would you have a tree grow up strong and challenge the fury of the storm? It must be rooted deep in the soil. Would you have a man, highly gifted by nature, gain the good will of the people, enjoy the sympathy of all, and rise to great power and fame? Let him be modest and live among the people. A monarch is never so great as when he enters the huts of the poor, comforts the afflicted, and stands by the humble bedside of some unfortunate victim stricken with a contagious disease. When were the angels confirmed in grace and assured of the possession of eternal glory? When they bowed down before

their Lord, recognizing Him as such even in His assumed human nature, so far inferior to theirs. When was Jesus Christ, the Man-God, crowned with glory, when did He go up on high, every knee in heaven, on earth, and in hell bending before Him, and every tongue singing a hymn to His name, which is above every other name? When He made Himself obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. And, on the contrary, when will a house totter and fall to the ground? When will a tree be torn up by the hurricane? When the foundations are not deep enough for its height, when the roots have not taken a firm hold in the soil. When is a great man, a sovereign, a genius, scorned and hated by the people? When he is proud and haughty. When were the angels cast out from heaven? When they rose up against their Maker, as if they were His equals. The words, whoso exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoso humbles himself shall be exalted, are the story of the whole human race, and, says a distinguished writer, sum up the life, the very existence, the mission, and the entire work of Jesus Christ on this earth, which had been abandoned to the delirium of its pride. Humility is an absolute condition to entrance into His kingdom. Whosoever relies on himself and trusts to his own wisdom, to his own virtue and strength, will ever continue miserable and sink into his own nothingness. This is the story of humanity in rebellion against God. Whosoever acknowledges his own nothingness will be borne up by God Himself and share in the ineffable glory of His life. Such is the story of the humble incorporated into Christ.[1]

[1]Didon, Life of Jesus Christ, vol. ii., p. 104.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY IX

BRETHREN: I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.—EPISTLE, *Eph.* iv. 1-6.

THE Epistle of to-day's Mass begins just where the Epistle of last Sunday left off, and both are taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. The six verses that I am about to explain are full of the highest practical teaching and each of them would furnish a subject for a discourse. In them the Apostle warmly exhorts the faithful to live as Christians, to preserve concord among themselves, and in a few words he points out the principles and the causes which should inspire and promote this concord. By merely referring to the leading topic of the present commentary, I am quite confident I shall gain your undivided attention.

"*I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called.*" I can not, my friends, conceal how deeply my heart is moved on reading the first words of

this verse, as they are found in the Vulgate,[1] *I beseech* or I *conjure you.* Who is this who prays, exhorts, and conjures? It is the apostle Paul, who bore on his body the stigmata, or wounds of Christ, who was called by Christ as a *vessel of election,* who had labored and suffered more than all the other apostles; who was conducted in chains, amid infinite perils and sufferings, from Jerusalem to Rome, and who from his prison there, within a few steps of the imperial palace, where Nero was devising means to exterminate the Christians, dictated the above words; it is he who said to the Ephesians with a note of holy pride in his voice, and as an argument more powerful than any other for obtaining a hearing, "*I, a prisoner in the Lord,*" that is, "in His name and in the name of the Gospel, I conjure you."

And to whom does he address these fervid words? To his children, who by his teaching, his charity, and his miracles had been gained to Christ. But why should he, Paul the Apostle, already an old man and many times a martyr for Christ, now near his crown and clothed with the high authority which he received in a way wholly extraordinary from Christ Himself, why should he beg and implore his children, the Ephesians? Does he forget his dignity and the power that is vested in him? Why should he pray and beseech

[1]To the Epistle, as found in the Missal, in the Mass of this Sunday, are added the words: "Who is blessed forever and ever. Amen." These words are not found in the Epistle of St. Paul; I can not make out the reason for this addition, nor do interpreters throw any light upon it. I have thought it best to pass them over and to confine myself to the authentic text of St. Paul.

those who were in every way so far his inferiors? Why does he not command instead of beseeching? No, Paul does not forget his dignity, nor does he forget the power with which he is invested and which on occasions he knew how to use; but having been formed in the school of Jesus Christ, he beseeches rather than commands; he realizes that he is a father, and he uses language full of love and tenderness; he realizes that authority is an office, a ministry, and a service; he realizes that to command may be to give offense to self-love, which he prefers to subdue and gain by entreaty, and hence he does not say: "I, a prisoner in the Lord, *command* you, but, I *pray,* I *conjure* you, *I beseech you in the Lord.*" This language, breathing the very spirit of humility and love, expresses the character and the heart of the Gospel and makes us realize the difference between authority as exercised by laymen, who use power and force, and as exercised by the Church, which employs persuasion and prayer: "*I beseech you.*" These words, "*I, a prisoner in the Lord,*" are of wonderful force and surpassing eloquence, and are used with all the art of a consummate orator. Take the one word "*prisoner.*" He is not diffusive, he does not describe his griefs and privations, his vexations and the horrors of his prison; all this he leaves to the imagination of his children; it would seem that he concealed all this on purpose in order not to distress them, and hence put everything into the one word "*prisoner.*" He hopes to obtain what he asks from the Ephesians, not by his authority, but by the fact that he is a prisoner for the Faith: "*I, a prisoner*

in the Lord, beseech you." How delicate is his appeal, and how forcible.

My friends, what an example and pattern is St. Paul to all those who hold authority of any kind whether in the home, in commercial life, in civil and political society, or in the Church. Instead of saying: "I *will,* I *command,* I *insist,*" let us, as circumstances permit, use these or like words: "*I pray you; I beg you; if you please; if I am not asking too much,*" and by so tempering our speech we shall often obtain what we could not with harsher words. Moreover, the feeling of brotherhood among us, for we are all brothers and equal before God, demands this; so also do ordinary prudence and the respect we owe our brothers, who, though our inferiors, do not on that account cease to be our brothers, and who are quick to resent intemperate and imperious language.

St. Paul prays and conjures the faithful of Ephesus to do what? "*To live worthy of the vocation in which you are called,*"[1] that is to live worthy of the vocation of Christians. The calling of a Christian comprehends all Christian teaching, theoretical and practical; it includes the Creed, which a Christian must profess, and the Commandments, which he must practise. A soldier who voluntarily takes service under a captain and ranges himself under his banner, swearing on his conscience and before all men to be loyal, is bound to prove himself worthy of both. Now who is a Christian? He is one who is in duty

[1] In the Latin text we read: *Ut digne ambuletis;* which I have translated *to live,* or, speaking Biblically, to conduct oneself well: as I have elsewhere noted, to walk implies to go forward, to live, to regulate oneself; in a word it means one's practical conduct.

bound to follow Jesus Christ, who voluntarily ranges himself under His banner, who, before earth and heaven, in Baptism, in Confirmation, in receiving the Blessed Eucharist, and in a hundred other ways, has solemnly declared that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is his law, that the cross is his standard, and that his profession is that of a Christian, and to all this he pledges his life and his honor. In the profession of his faith, in his life, in his works, at all times, and in every place and under every condition, he ought neither do, nor say, nor even think, or desire anything not conformable with his calling as a Christian. Any one who hears him, or sees him, or considers his conduct should be able to say: There is a Christian who does honor to his calling and to the name he bears. Examining ourselves in the light of truth, can we say that up to the present moment we have lived, and that we now live, a life worthy of our calling? Alas, how often we have fallen short of it, in words professing to be Christians, and in conduct dishonoring the name we bear! For the future let us live as the Apostle bids us: *"I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to live worthy of the vocation in which you are called."*

From general exhortations St. Paul passes to particular and tells how Christians should show themselves equal to their high calling. Here is what he says: *"With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity."* St. Paul says that Christians will live according to their calling principally by practising the two virtues of humility and meekness, which are inseparable from each other. He who has a lowly

opinion of himself, or rather, he who judges of himself correctly and is conscious that he is nothing and wishes to be dealt with accordingly, is said to be *humble;*[1] and he is said to be *meek* or *mild,* who submits to another's judgment and without taking offense allows himself to be molded and fashioned like soft wax. Hence you see that meekness is a daughter of humility, and where the former is found so also is the latter. It is worthy of note that St. Paul, in indicating the chief virtues which do honor to the calling of a Christian, names *humility* and *meekness* first. Nor does he stop here; he goes on to add the virtue in which meekness finds its fullest expression, namely, *longanimity,* or the patience that never wearies, that is ever the same, that never yields to anger. The exercise of meekness and longanimity consists mainly in bearing with our own defects, which is comparatively easy, and with the defects of others, which is very difficult: "*Supporting one another.*" It is in bearing with the annoyances and defects of others, and especially in not resenting wrongs done us that we shall know that we are meek and humble.

The Apostle has a habit of crowding together thoughts and words and phrases, but always in a way that one is either the cause or the effect of the other. He mentions the two chief virtues of a Christian, namely, humility and meekness, and he adds that the latter, as the occasion requires,

[1] "*Humilis* dicitur quasi humi alitus, et *mansuetus* quasi manu assuetus et ductilis. Omnis autem humilitas non tam in sermone, quam in mente est, ut humiles nos esse conscientia noverit, et numquam nos vel scire, vel intelligere, vel esse aliquid æstimemus."—St. Anselmus, apud À Lapide.

should lead on to patience or longanimity; and then the question arises in his mind: "Whence comes the strength to be patient amid all the asperities and trials of life?" From the virtue, which is the mother of all virtues, and hence he adds: "*With patience supporting one another in charity,*" as if he would say, charity is the ever-living spring of meekness and longanimity. Fancy that in the household, in the family, in the parish, or in any society, say in the nation or in the state, the virtues of *humility, meekness,* and *patience,* all daughters of charity, and all so frequently and so earnestly commanded and inculcated by St. Paul, were exactly observed! Would not this world be changed into a paradise? How many evils would be removed and what happiness would reign here? If only the Christian religion penetrated, pervaded, and inspired human society, what more could be desired?

But let us follow the Apostle, who goes on to say: "*Careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*" The virtues mentioned above by the Apostle, when nourished by charity, will fill our hearts with a continual and loving desire to preserve the unity of the spirit. This is one of their most precious fruits. In body we are separated; space and time necessarily divide us; but across space and time which sever our bodies, making it impossible for us to hear or see one another or to converse together, we can join hands, hold intercourse, hear each other's voices, and be intimately united as members of one family and as having one heart. How can this be done? In this way: Truth is ever the same both in place

and time. For truth there are no boundaries, neither rivers nor mountains, neither seas nor continents; it is like to God, whose daughter it is. Now if I hold firmly the truths that come from God, and if each of you, and all men do the same, is it not clear that in holding these truths we are all united in mind, but separated in body? The truths that I believe, and that you believe and that our brothers in the Faith, dispersed from end to end of the world, believe, are the golden thread that marvelously unites us all in the spirit. Separated from one another by thousands of miles, by tens of centuries, by language, by habits, by customs, and by a thousand conditions, we all recite the same Creed, we all call upon the same Father in heaven, we all obey the same commandments, we all receive the same Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, and we all aspire to the same end, the possession of everlasting happiness. This is the unity of the spirit which St. Paul wishes his children to possess, a unity which no power, neither on earth nor in hell, can take from them: "*Careful to keep the unity of the spirit.*"

But this is not all. St. Paul wishes that this unity of the spirit should be preserved in the "*bond of peace.*" Absolutely speaking, it is quite possible for us to have one spirit in professing the same faith and in accepting the same commandments, and still be troubled in mind, annoying others and being annoyed by them; this we see happening daily round about us; people, who not only profess the same spirit, but who are really virtuous, can not live in peace under the same roof, the one being a constant trial to the other.

Now St. Paul, in the name of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, exhorts all to crown their union in the truth of a common faith by the bond of peace, which should be as a silken cord, binding all hearts together, each to each: "*In the bond of peace.*" This beautiful truth of union in peace with all men, even the restless and the quarrelsome, was deeply engraven on the heart of St. Bernard, who wrote these words to one who claimed to have been offended by him: "My brother, no matter what you do, I shall still continue to love you, even though you do not love me; I shall be with you, even against your will, and even against my own. I am united to you by a strong bond, by the bond of sincere charity, which never fails. I shall be peaceful with the turbulent; I shall not give place to anger, in order not to give place to the devil. Overcome by injuries, I shall overcome by homage. I shall do good offices to those who are ungracious; I shall be open-handed with the ungrateful; I shall honor those who despise me."[1] You may search the literature of Greece and Rome from end to end and all profane history and you will not find sentiments such as these, sentiments that show to what a height of heroism Christian charity and Christian peace can go.

Let us go back to the text. "*One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling.*" These words of the Apostle are a recapitulation of the two preceding verses and mean this: You are but one body and one spirit, as the hope of the glory and immortality, to which you are called, is also one. Here St. Paul again makes

[1]Letter cclii, to the Abbot of Premonstratensis.

use of the beautiful image, so familiar to him, to represent the unity of the Church, and it expresses his meaning to a nicety. A man, as you know, has arms, eyes, ears, and other members, not only distinct but differing one from the other both in themselves and in the offices they discharge; and yet there is only one body, and its members are so intimately joined together that one aids the other, and if one suffers all the others suffer together with it. Why such a variety of members and such unity among them? Because one single soul gives life to all, to each according to its nature, moves all, directs and regulates all. The like should take place in the body of the faithful; they are distinct, they differ one from the other in nature, in grace, and in office, but they are all animated by the spirit of God and by charity; they are all going forward to one common end, they all form one body, having, like the Christians of the primitive Church, one heart and one soul. So deeply impressed is the Apostle with this unity of the spirit, with this harmony among the members of the Church, that he repeats it under another, a fuller and more striking image, which he draws from the eternal Generator of all things, saying: "*One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.*" The body of the faithful, the Church, should be one and only one, because the *Lord is one,* the absolute and universal Master, from whom the Church derives her origin; Jesus Christ, who with His blood ransomed the Church and made her His Spouse, is one; the *Faith,* which leads us all to her, which unites all with her, *is one; it is unchangeable* as He, who is its object, is unchangeable; *so also is*

Baptism one, since it is received but once, is ever the same, and is the one gate by which it is possible to enter into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Church. In this triple cause of the unity of the Church, which may be reduced to one single cause, namely, to God, there is an obvious order or gradation. God, the one God in heaven, is the first and the absolute object of it. How can we go to God, our one and only Lord, the ultimate object of all our love and of all our longing? Only by the Faith, which He Himself has given us. And how can we receive that faith? How is it sealed within us? Only by Baptism, which God also has given us. God, Faith, Baptism; one sole God, one sole Faith, one sole Baptism. Why should we not form one sole body among ourselves, since we all have one sole God, from whom we come and to whom we return; one sole Faith, which leads us to Him; one sole Baptism, which stamps that faith within us and stamps upon us the character of children of God?

Having named the name of God, the one sole God, the Apostle, as if transported out of himself, and gazing as it were into light inaccessible, in an impulse of rapturous love, cries out: "Yes, God, one sole God, who is the Father of all creatures in heaven and on earth, of angels and of men; who, in wisdom and goodness is above all and surpasses all; who by His infinite power and strength moves all, penetrates all, gives life and fecundity to all; who in a most special manner dwells in us by His grace, guides, and governs us; from whom comes all that is true and beautiful and good; who is one in essence; who by truth and

love draws us gently and strongly; who is the first and supreme cause of all unity; in Him are we one body and one spirit, in the bond of unutterable peace, which is a figure and a pledge of the peace we shall possess in heaven: *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in us all.*"

And here we are reminded of what takes place under our very eyes, and the thought saddens us for that which gives rise to it is deplorable beyond words. St. Paul in speaking of God tells us in sublime language that *He is above all,* and *through all,* and *in all.* It is a truth which faith affirms and the natural reason itself proclaims. God is all in all, in Him we live and move and have our being. But what a sight confronts us! Scientific men, men vested with power and authority, are for the most part, from a dread of the opinions of men, either ashamed to call upon God, or they openly deny and spurn Him, and say boastfully: "We have no need of God; science can get on without Him; society can exist and prosper without Him; honesty and order can be attained by the knowledge, labor, power, and industry of man." This is what is said, if not in word, at least in act, and hence the name of God is no longer heard either in the schoolroom or in legislative halls, nor is it inserted in the solemn acts of authority. Great and good God, Thou who art the beginning and end of all things, who by Thy providence dost govern all things, who art the Father of all; pardon these men, who puffed up by science and exalted by power, ignore and blaspheme Thee. They know not what they do. Enlighten their minds,

touch their hearts, let them know who Thou art, and they will return to Thee, who art the way, the truth, and the life, who art all in all.

HOMILY X

AT THAT *time the Pharisees came nigh to Jesus:* And one of them, a Doctor of the Law, asked Him, tempting Him: Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say to Him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son? And no man was able to answer Him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.—GOSPEL, *Matt.* xxii. 35-46.

THE colloquy between Jesus and the Pharisees, of which St. Matthew has left us this record, and the preceding discourses of Our Lord, beginning at the twenty-fifth chapter, all took place in Jerusalem, or, to be precise, in the Temple, or in the portico or porch of the Temple, during the

last week of His life, that is between Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday. All this is clear from the four Gospels. Those four days, the last of His life, were days of incessant discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees, who had sworn to have His life. The news of these disputations was noised about the city and produced an enormous effect, which was enhanced by the fact that they took place in the Temple, that the city was filled with pilgrims, who had come from all sides to celebrate the Pasch, and that Jesus had recently wrought many miracles and especially that stupendous one, the calling of Lazarus back to life, at the very gates of Jerusalem; and, moreover, the fact that in His discourses Jesus Christ openly avowed and affirmed that He was the long-expected Messias and Son of God, still further increased the general ferment. Every one was discussing those disputations and marveling at what they heard concerning the miracles of Jesus; the whole city was in a turmoil of excitement.[1]

The passage I am about to explain is divided into two parts; the first contains an insidious question put to Jesus by a Scribe, or a Doctor of the Law; and the second, a question put by Christ to the Pharisees, the only effect of which was, not to convince them, but to reduce them to silence. You will kindly give me your attention while I explain both parts of this Gospel.

[1]In our age of feeble convictions and of religious skepticism we can form no idea of the interest, or, I should rather say, of the ardent interest which the Jewish people, a people eminently religious, took in the person of Christ and in the strife of which He was the object. Even in our day in the Orient religious questions are the questions that touch the people most intimately and rouse them even to fanaticism, and of this we have had recent examples.

In the verses that precede this Gospel, which the Church bids us explain to you to-day, the text speaks of the Sadducees, the epicureans of the Hebrew people, who denied the existence of spirits and of the soul, and the resurrection of the body; and it tells us that these Sadducees laid a trap for Christ by putting a question to Him, worthy of such men, and that Jesus promptly confuted them and put them to shame in the presence of the Pharisees by showing them the necessity of a future life and of the resurrection of the body. The Pharisees, who were enemies of the Sadducees, were delighted; but they were themselves a contemptible breed and their conduct gives us still another illustration of how the passions can blind even intelligent and educated men. The Sadducees lived tranquilly in the midst of the Hebrew people, and it appears certain that many of them were members of the Great National Council and not a few of them of the priesthood. They did not believe in a future life, and, to use a term common in our day, they were *materialists;* they aimed at destroying all religion, root and branch, and at making its very existence impossible; and yet they were left in peace, they were respected and even aided by the Pharisees, who were so rigid in religious matters that they professed to see, in a miracle performed on the Sabbath, a violation of the divine Law. Not only were they allowed to live in peace, not only were they esteemed by the Pharisees, but both they and the Pharisees joined hands and became friends and allies, when there was question of making a stand against Jesus Christ and of persecuting Him.

The Pharisees railed at Christ as a violator of the Sabbath because He healed a paralytic on that day, and they had not a word to say against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the body. So true is it that the wicked are always in league against the virtuous, whose very presence vexes and annoys them.

St. Matthew goes on to say that Jesus had scarcely silenced the Sadducees with an answer, such as only He knew how to give, when a Pharisee, a Scribe or a Doctor of the Law, stood up interrogating Him "*and tempting Him.*" Note the words, "*Tempting Him.*" It may be that this lawyer wished by his question to test the teaching of Jesus and to find out how much He knew about the Law, which would not have been a very serious fault; but knowing, as we do, the rancor and the malignant hatred of the Pharisees toward Jesus, and knowing, too, that this lawyer was a Pharisee, and that he attacked Jesus immediately after the Sadducees had been silenced, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he wished to entrap Him and, should an opportunity offer, to bring charges against Him. Whatever was his real motive he put this question to Our Lord: "*Master, which is the great* (that is, the greatest) *precept of the Law?*" Was this lawyer ignorant as to which was the greatest precept of the Law? It is hardly credible. True, there was a controversy among the Jews as to which was the first and the greatest precept of the Law, some holding that, as the greatest act of divine worship was to offer the sacrifices prescribed by the Law, this was also its supremest precept. But I think with St. John

Chrysostom that this lawyer, knowing that Jesus had avowed and declared Himself the expected Messias, the Son of God and God, hoped that in His reply He would say something about Himself and about the Mosaic Law, which might afford ground for accusation against Him, or at least for discrediting Him with the people. But Jesus, without adverting to the guilt of his motive, or to his want of candor and good will, replied with admirable precision: *"Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind."* I shall not here explain in detail the force of these words, as I think the phrase is only a strong and vigorous way of putting the thought they convey, which is admirably expressed in briefer form by St. Luke:[1] *"Love the Lord, thy God, with all thy strength."* To love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, means in substance to love Him as much and as best we can, by directing toward Him all the activities of our being and making them serve Him;[2] which means, as the interpreters say, to love God above all created things; to please Him before all created things, even taken together and multiplied beyond all count; to make Him, as our ultimate and supreme end, the object of all our thoughts and desires, of all our affections and works; to prize Him above all things; and to be disposed to sacrifice all things rather than in any way to offend Him. "Would you

[1] x. 27.

[2] These words of Our Lord are found in Deuteronomy (viii. 5), and Jesus appealed to the Book of Moses to close the mouth of the Pharisee and to show the perfect harmony between His own teaching and that of Moses.

know," says St. Bernard, "what ought to be the measure of your love toward God? I will tell you in a word: *Love Him without measure,* that is, place no limits to your love either in measure or intensity."

You understand, of course, that a love such as this, a love not only recommended but commanded by God, necessarily demands the doing of all the works and the observance of all the precepts of the divine Law and of all those, which, in the name and by the authority of God, the Church imposes upon us, for it is inconceivable that a love, that does not go beyond the mind and the heart, can be a true, a real, and a supreme love. And could God dispense us from such a love, could He be content with any sort of love, such, for example, as we bear toward creatures, even those dearest to us? Certainly not, because He is omnipotent. He could not, without abdicating His own rights, dispense us from the obligation of giving Him our supremest love, a love beyond every other love. And as He is a Being above every other being, eternal, immutable, and infinite, most just and most holy, the center and fountain of all perfections, and therefore in Himself most worthy of all love, He can not be content with an inferior and an ordinary love, as this would imply on His part a disavowal of His perfections and a willingness to be put on a par with creatures, or, still worse, to have them preferred before Him, which would be absolutely at variance with the truth and with His own Being. And can we love Him above everything else? Not only can we love Him, but it is our duty, our supremest duty, and the sum

of all our duties so to love Him. Not only can we love Him above everything else, but this, with the aid of grace, which is never wanting, is very easy. Is it not very easy to love a being who is beauty itself, and justice, and goodness, and who is our greatest and only benefactor, the source of all perfection? We are impelled by nature itself to love creatures in whom even a faint glow of these perfections is manifest; we find it at times impossible to resist their charms and attractions and are carried beyond the limits that law and justice impose; and can we not, then, love Him who possesses all perfection in a sovereignly perfect degree?

And why is it, you will say, that so few love Him with all their strength? Because they know very little about Him, and they know very little about Him, because He is very seldom in their thoughts; seduced and carried away by the fugitive beauty of creatures, they never, or very rarely and heedlessly think of their Creator; they are constantly gazing upon the light that rests like a glory upon flower and tree and floods the earth, but they never give a thought to the sun from whence those torrents of light come.

"*This,*" said Christ, still addressing Himself to the lawyer, "*This is the greatest and the first commandment.*" This was a reply to the question: "*Master, which is the great,* that is, the greatest, *commandment of the Law,*" and Jesus might have stopped here, but instead He added another precept for the purpose of giving the Pharisee and those who were with him a lesson they had not asked, but of which they were very

much in need. "I have told you," said Christ to him, "which is the greatest and the first commandment of the Law; I will now tell you which is the second, one like to the first, and inseparable from it: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"[1] Why, it may be asked, did Jesus Christ go beyond the question and give more in His answer than had been asked for? Why did He add to the first and greatest commandment a second? St. John Chrysostom thinks that the purpose of the additional words was gently to convey an important lesson to the lawyer. "You ask Me," says Jesus to the Pharisee, "which is the first and the greatest commandment of the Law? Very well; I tell you that it is to love God above everything else; but there is another precept, namely, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,* and this should have taught you that you are forbidden to lay snares for your brother, as you have just been trying to lay snares for Me, who am your neighbor and your brother." Others think, and the interpretation seems more probable and more natural, that the two precepts, of love of God and love of our neighbor, are coupled together, because as Jesus Christ expressly says, the latter or the second is *like to the first,* is a consequence of it, is derived from it, and the two are inseparable.

If my memory serves me right, I have shown in another homily that love of God is impossible without love of our neighbor, and hence I shall pass over this point. If we truly love God above

[1] *Diliges*, thou shalt love, though the future tense, is equivalent to the imperative. The whole passage is given in Leviticus (xix. 18).

everything else we must love whatever He loves and, as far as we can, love all things as He loves them. Now God loves all men; and so true is it that He loves them that He willed to create them, He preserves them, He lavishes favors upon them, He suffered and died for them, and He wishes them to be partakers of His own bliss. Could any love be more living and ardent and operative than this? Men bear upon them the image of God and God makes in each an abiding place and says that what we shall do for them He will regard as done to Himself. Can any bond more intimate be conceived than that between the love of God and the love of our neighbor? I hardly think so.

There may also be another reason that led Jesus Christ to couple together the two precepts of love of God and love of our neighbor, although there is no intimation that this reason was implied in the question, and it is this. At that time the divine precept inculcating brotherly love had been obscured and changed by an interpretation which the Pharisees had put upon it and which reflected their own prejudices. The divine precept read: *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;"* now the Hebrew word *recha* signifies both *neighbor* and *friend,* and the Pharisees in their narrowness of heart, made the precept read this way: *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor who is thy friend";* and then going still further they said: *"Thou shalt not love thy neighbor, who is not thy friend; rather thou shalt hate thy enemy";* or, as Christ puts it: *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy."*[1] By this interpretation the Pharisees had not only changed, they had destroyed, the

[1]Matt. v. 43.

precept of charity, limiting it to their own countrymen, nay, to their friends and well-wishers. Jesus Christ restored the divine precept to its pristine purity, extended its scope so that it embraced all men without distinction, and coupled it with the precept of the love of God, of which He made it a part.[1]

[1]In many points the Pharisees had shamefully distorted the teaching of the Bible and of tradition, and for this Jesus frequently reproved them, as He does here concerning charity and elsewhere concerning marriage and its indissolubility. And on this latter point I will here refer to the difficulty of the Sadducees and to the answer of Christ, which is a clear and a very natural one, once we know the erroneous interpretation introduced by Pharisees. The explanation will be of service to many priests, who find words of Christ in St. Matthew (xix. 9) on the indissolubility of marriage, so difficult to understand, for here He seems to admit, as Protestants hold, that adultery can dissolve the marriage bond. It is to be noted that Moses, because of their *hardness of heart* permitted the Hebrews to repudiate and divorce their wives. But for what reasons? Moses does not specify them, but they were assuredly grave, since they had to be set down in the bill of divorce.

At the time of Christ there existed two schools, that of Hillel and that of Schammai. Hillel, extending the causes of divorce beyond all limits, held that a husband might put away his wife for any cause whatever; for example, it was enough *if she did not roast the beef to his taste, if she went out of the house alone, if she became blear-eyed;* in a word, if she ceased to find favor in his sight, he had the right of giving her a bill of divorce. This Schammai denied; he restricted this liberty, which he said was contrary both to the Law of Moses and to its spirit. The Pharisees asked Jesus: *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* This was precisely the teaching of Rabbi Hillel. Jesus repudiated the excessive laxity of Hillel, as implied in the words *for every cause*, and following the spirit of the Hebraic law, restricted it to fornication, that is, to adultery. Hence Jesus Christ in this passage, which has been and still is the torment of interpreters, is not speaking of marriage under the New Law, as many contend and as would suit Protestants, but of marriage under the Mosaic Law, which was the subject of His discourse and concerning which the Pharisees interrogated Him. When the text is understood in this way the difficulty is solved, and hence Jesus does no more than recall the Hebrews to the observance of the Mosaic Law, in opposition to the erroneous interpretation of many Pharisees.

To some it may seem strange that Christ speaks only of the love we owe our brothers and not at all of the love we owe ourselves; He does not mention the latter because it is taken for granted that man will love himself, and so natural is it and so necessary to do so, that there is no need of reminding him of it; but as a matter of fact Jesus does refer to it here indirectly, inasmuch as He makes it the measure of our love for our neighbor: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"[1] We should, then, love ourselves, and we should love our neighbor as we love ourselves, more or less according to the ties of duty which bind us to him. Love is like the light that comes from the sun, which rests on all creatures capable of receiving it; God is the source of all love, from Him it goes forth into every creature and is poured out on all men only to return to Him again, for He is the beginning and end of all true love.

"*On these two commandments,*" adds Christ, "*dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets.*" That is, the whole Law of Moses and all the teaching of the prophets may be summed up in these two precepts of love of God and love of our neighbor. A man and a Christian who truly loves God and loves his neighbor will never fail in a single duty toward either; he will fulfil exactly the whole Law, all the precepts of faith and hope, he will practise all the virtues, he will discharge all the works of mercy, in fine, he will be a perfect Christian. Let us, then, my friends, value this charity

[1] "Non est hic tui dilectio prætermissa; dicitur enim ut diligas proximum tuum sicut te ipsum."—St. Augustine, De Doct. Christ., c. xxvii.

as we should, and as St. Paul says, we shall fulfil the whole Law.

St. Matthew says nothing as to how the Pharisees received the words of Christ, but His reply is given by St. Mark.[1] *"Well, Master, Thou hast said in truth that there is one God, and there is no other besides Him, and that He should be loved with the whole heart and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength; and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices. And Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."* From these words of Christ we may conclude that the Pharisee, though he had an evil motive in first interrogating Our Lord, was enlightened and convinced by His answers and brought to a better state of mind, a rather singular and exceptional thing in a Pharisee.

Our Saviour had silenced the Sadducees, and He had closed the mouth of the Pharisee, who was forced in his own despite to approve His teaching. None of the bystanders, though they longed to do so, dared to put any further question to Him. The purpose of all His miracles, and especially of all the discourses He delivered in the Temple and under its porticos during the last week of His life, was uniformly that of establishing His divine mission and of proving and persuading His hearers that He was the Son of God. This, in fact, was the primary object of all His teaching, the foundation of all His work. Once faith in His own divine origin was secured, all else would follow of itself.

[1] xii. 32-34.

He well knew that in declaring Himself to be the Son of God He was provoking the fury of His enemies and putting the seal upon His own death; and yet He could not hesitate an instant to confirm with His death His own divine origin and His mission. And hence, instead of contenting Himself with defending Himself, He took the offensive and, having replied to His adversaries, who fairly pelted Him with treacherous questions, turning to the Pharisees, a large number of whom surrounded Him, still smarting under the humiliations they had suffered, He put this question to them: *"What think you of Christ; whose Son is He?"* To the Hebrews Christ, or the expected Messias, was everything; on Him were concentrated all the hopes of the nation; all their thoughts and aspirations centered in Him; all their rites and sacrifices pointed to Him; all their prophets had foretold Him; the entire people lived only in anticipation of His coming; and at that time after the preaching of John, after the preaching and miracles of Christ, and the manifest fulfilment of the prophecies, there was to them no subject comparable in interest with that of the Messias. The question concerning Christ and the Messias stirred His hearers to the very depths of their souls and forced them to declare their belief as to His origin and dignity: *"Whose Son is Christ or the Messias?"* The question was clear and precise and demanded an answer equally clear and precise. They ought to have answered: "He is the Son of God and of David," that is, He is God and man. This their Holy Books confirmed in a hundred places, and Isaias, the greatest of

their prophets, also affirms it in explicit terms. But the Pharisees, whether from ignorance or from bad faith, or from some other motive, replied: "*He is the Son of David,*" thus impliedly confessing that they regarded Him simply as a man, since they made no allusion to His divine origin, which they ought to have put before His human. To them the Messias, the Christ to come, was a prophet, the greatest of the prophets, the glory of the people of Israel, their liberator, a temporal rather than a spiritual liberator, but nothing more.[1] How different is the answer of the Pharisees from that which St. Peter gave to the same question. When Christ asked the apostles: "*Who do you say that I am?*" St. Peter boldly answered: "*Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*" The fishermen of Galilee, who knew little or nothing of the Sacred Books, but who had a simple faith, knew and confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ, whereas the proud and learned Pharisees saw in the Messias only a man, a son of David, thus verifying the words of Christ: "*O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I confess to Thee because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.*" The humble and the simple have a higher and clearer vision of truth than the proud and the learned, and St. Francis of Assisi had a greater knowledge of God than the most acute philosophers and theologians.

Having gotten from the Scribes and Pharisees

[1]St. Mark (xii. 35 et seq.) and St. Luke (xx. 41 et seq.) narrating this same fact give it more succinctly: "*How say they that Christ is the Son of David? David himself saith in the Book of Psalms: The Lord said to my Lord,* etc."

their answer, that Christ is the Son of David, Jesus followed it up with this peremptory argument: "You say that Christ is the Son of David, and of David alone, and that therefore He is a man and nothing more; if this be true, will you tell Me how David, inspired of God, could have written these words of the Psalm: *The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on my right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool?* If, then, David called Him Lord, how is He his Son?" Before explaining this answer of our divine Master it is necessary to say a word on this, the One Hundred and Ninth Psalm. It is very short; it was a favorite with the Hebrews, as it is also a favorite with the Church, which makes her priests recite it daily. Even the Synagogue held that it referred to the Messias, and this was so clear that the Scribes and the Pharisees themselves did not dare deny it, which they would have done if they could. This magnificent Psalm affirms the divinity of Christ; His equality with the Father, His eternal priesthood, and His final triumph after His humiliations.[1] The Lord, the Father, has said, that is, has willed from all eternity, that the Lord, the Son, shall sit at His right hand, shall have full and absolute

[1]One of the special difficulties met with in the explanation of the Psalms is the change of the subject, who speaks, without the slightest intimation of it. If this usage, so common in the Psalms, is kept in mind, many difficulties will disappear. For example take the word *Dixit* in this, the One Hundred and Ninth Psalm; in the first, second, and third verses, it is God, the Father, who speaks to the Son, the Man-God, and this is said distinctly. In the first part of the fourth verse it is the prophet who speaks, and in the second part the words are again put into the mouth of the Father, and there is nothing to indicate the transition. In the last three verses, the fifth, sixth, and seventh, the prophet speaks as an historian and again there is no intimation of the transition from one person to another.

power, equal to His own, shall subdue His enemies, and make of them His most splendid triumph. Such is the text cited by Jesus, from which He argues thus: Here David affirms that God said to Christ, his Lord: "Sit at My right hand." David calls the future Christ his Lord; but if Christ is the son of David and a simple man, David, who is His father, could not call Him Lord, and give Him the same name he gives to the Father. Therefore Christ, who is in a sense the son of David, but also his Lord, is God; in other words, Christ is true man and true God, and this David clearly teaches. Such is the reasoning of Christ.

Jesus, in citing these clear-cut words of the Psalm, says substantially that He is the son of David and that it is a dignity to be his son, but He goes on to show clearly that He is also the Son of God, and hence that He is both the son of David and David's Lord. The Scribes and Pharisees had by their formalism made the practical part of the Law oppressive; they had set up a frigid morality, and by their repulsive monotheism had separated man from God, relegating God to the heights of heaven; while, on the other hand, the prophets had revived and kept alive the notion of a present God, one at work in the midst of men, illuminating their minds and moving their wills; and now Jesus Christ tears the veil asunder, saying: "This is God in your midst; He speaks to you; He teaches you; you will not listen to Him; you spurn Him; you have already determined that He shall die; you declare yourselves His enemies; but do not forget that He will be your Judge, that His tri-

umph can not fail, and that you will be a footstool under His feet." Christ declares that He is God and the supreme Judge of His enemies.

What was the upshot of it all? How were His words received? The Gospel does not tell us, nor does it intimate that any of Christ's hearers were moved and subdued by His words; it closes with this mournful sentence: "*And no man was able to answer Him a word.*" They were conscious that they had been vanquished by the word of truth, and yet not a single one of them surrendered, not a single one of them cast himself at Our Lord's feet and said, as did Peter: "*Lord, Thou hast the words of life,* we acknowledge and we adore Thee." They preferred, says St. Augustine, to eat their hearts away in a furious and haughty silence, rather than acknowledge themselves humble learners: "*Neither durst any man from that forth ask Him any more questions,*" and so of their own will they shut their minds against the light of the truth. This is a frightful and a terrifying judgment, the natural and inevitable fruit of the vile passion of pride. Men see and feel that they are in error, truth is luminous and brilliant before their eyes; they hear it from the lips of the ministers of the Church and from their true friends; they see it in the behavior of their Christian wives, of their believing and pious children; they feel it in a restless and disturbed conscience; they hear it from a voice down in the depths of their soul, the voice of God and the voice of grace; a cold shudder runs through them; their heart is in a ferment; and yet they refuse to break away from old prejudices; they are slaves of human re-

spect; they are, it may be, defiled with the guilt of sins of the baser passions, or they are victims of a cold and haughty pride, and they close their eyes to the truth; they will not open their lips to those who would teach and encourage them; they smother their remorse in the absorbing occupations and the noisy distractions of the world; they close their ears and make themselves deaf, and little by little, all about is silence, with the silence of death. Jesus was silent because those men would not interrogate Him; and they would not interrogate Him because they would not hear the truth; and they would not hear the truth because it was a torment to them, because they hated it.

My God, do not in Thy mercy permit that any one of those who now listen to me shall ever spurn the truth; or that any one of them shall, as did the Scribes and Pharisees, from fear of knowing the truth, refuse to ask to be instructed by the teachers whom Thou hast placed in Thy Church.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XI

BRETHREN: I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus: That in all things you are made rich in Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge: As the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ.—EPISTLE, 1 *Cor.* i. 4-8.

THE Church appoints to be read in the Holy Mass of this Sunday the five verses which I have just repeated. They form the introduction to the first Epistle of St. Paul to the faithful of Corinth, and follow immediately after the salutation and the words of address with which the Apostle begins all his Letters, except that to the Hebrews. This Letter was written from Ephesus, where St. Paul then was, and whence he was to set out to go to Jerusalem at the approach of Easter in the fifty-sixth year of our era. It is not necessary to speak of the motives that inspired the Apostle to write this Epistle, which of all his Letters, except that to the Romans, is the most important, both because of its length and of the subjects treated in it, and hence it is placed next after that to the Romans. The few sentences which we are about to explain are in reality little more than an ex-

pression of good wishes and polite congratulations to the Corinthians, by which he hopes to gain an opening to write to them of most important and even, it may be, most painful truths. To-day's homily will be shorter than usual, and hence I ask your close attention. In commercial prosperity, in wealth, in refinement, in literary, scientific, and artistic culture, Corinth was one of the most celebrated cities of Greece. St. Paul went there from Athens and took up his abode in the house of a certain Aquila, who with his wife Priscilla had recently come from Rome, whence, together with other Jews, he had been expelled by a general order of the Emperor Claudius. God revealed to St. Paul that *He had much people in that city,* and bade him not to fear, but to speak out courageously.[1] He remained there eighteen months continuously and founded there a numerous and flourishing Church, and although there grew up in it divisions, which distracted it, and serious scandals and errors, nevertheless it was always a most illustrious Church and merited high praise from the Apostle.

After the usual salutation and good wishes, he goes on: *"I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus."*

First of all the Apostle assures the Corinthians that he keeps them in mind when in the presence of God and returns Him most earnest thanks in their behalf. The love which binds us to our acquaintances and friends, to kinsfolk and benefactors, keeps alive their memory in our soul, and this

[1]Acts xviii.

is strong and cherished in the measure in which our love for them is warm and ardent. Of this no proof is needed. Now, if this love be a true and pure love according to the Gospel, it should never be dissociated from the idea of God, from whom every good and holy gift comes and to whom it ever returns. But what happens, my friends? We love those who are dear to us and our love centers in them; it never or rarely rises up to God; it never prompts us to ask of Him for them every good gift or to thank Him for those He has given them. But think of St. Paul. He tenderly loves the Corinthians; they are borne by him in his heart as his own children; he taught them for many months, not asking them even for a crumb of bread; when away from them he still thinks of them, and his love, a love kindled at the flame of faith, lifts his mind and heart to God in thanksgiving for the favors granted to his beloved neophytes.

My friends, it is a duty imposed upon us by gratitude to thank God for favors lavished upon us; but it is also a good thing, useful to us and acceptable to God, to thank Him for favors granted to those who are dear to us. The reason is manifest. Love for others makes us rejoice when favors are done them, just as if they were done to us, and hence we should thank God for the former as well as for the latter. This is why St. Paul says: "*I give thanks to my God for you for the grace that is given you in Christ Jesus.*" It seems novel and strange that St. Paul in this place should add *my* to the name of *God,* as if God were exclusively his own, whereas Jesus has taught us

to say, *Our* Father. But the wonder disappears when we consider that the Apostle used the word *my* to express his own most ardent love of God, as we at times do ourselves, when we wish to express our love more ardently than usual, saying: "My God, my life, my all!" So far was it from the Apostle to think of God as exclusively his own, that in this very place he lifts his thoughts to Him, thanking Him for the gifts He has lavished upon those who are so dear to him. And note that St. Paul says that he does this not only often, but *continuously*. Is it because the Corinthians are skilled in science or rich in this world's goods that he is always giving thanks to God for them? By no means. The Apostle never mentions such things, they are not even in his thoughts. He calls the science of this world foolishness, and the temporal goods for which men so strive, filth. He values only goods that are truly such, the goods of the soul, the acquisition of grace and truth, and for these, which the Corinthians received in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, he gives incessant thanks to God.

My dear friends, all of us gathered together here in this Church have received precious graces, graces without number, through the merits of Jesus Christ; to enumerate them would be superfluous. Have we thanked God, the loving and generous Giver, for them? Have we not lived on forgetful, and, to the bad use made of the graces received, have we not added ingratitude? The beautiful similitude of St. Bernard never comes into our minds. He says: "The origin of all fountains and rivers is the sea; the origin of all virtues

and of all knowledge is Jesus Christ. By thanksgiving and gratitude this celestial stream of gifts returns to its source, that it may still continue to bless the earth."[1] Another beautiful sentence is this from "The Following of Christ": "The most efficacious way to obtain graces from God is to show ourselves grateful for those already received."

St. Paul gave thanks to God without ceasing for the gifts showered upon the Corinthians, but here he specifies two of these, as being the principal ones, *and to which,* in consequence, the others are allied. *"You are made rich in Him, in all utterance and in all knowledge."* The expression is harsh and obscure, and gives us an idea of the difficulty St. Paul had in clothing the truth in a language not his own, and which he only imperfectly understood. He wishes to say: "I thank God who has enriched you with His gifts, but particularly and primarily for having granted you the grace to hear the Gospel message, which has filled your mind with true science, the science of salvation." A few years before, the Corinthians were steeped in Paganism and lived as Pagans, ignorant of God, of their origin, of their duties, of the end for which they were created and the means to obtain it, and in consequence of this ignorance they were slaves to their passions, and their morals were so shockingly corrupt that St. Paul, in another place, says that they lived like *brute animals.* How did they come out from this filth? How were they started upon the way of virtue and

[1]"Origo omnium fontium et fluviorum mare est; virtutum autem et scientiæ eorum origo est Dominus noster Jesus Christus . . . .

salvation? What was the first beginning of their transformation? The word of truth, which came to them from God through St. Paul. Through it they began to know the true God, Jesus Christ, themselves, and their destiny; through it they turned their back upon the abominations of Paganism and the poverty of the Mosaic Law; through it they learned that science which is worth all the sciences of the most celebrated philosophers, and through which they were enabled to enter into what St. Peter calls the admirable light of God's kingdom. This is the obvious sense of the words of St. Paul.

My dear friends, that most precious gift of hearing the word of God in all utterance and of receiving through it the science of sciences, have not we it as well as the Corinthians and in a higher sense? The words of truth fell upon our ears while we were still babes within our mother's arms or while we played at her knee; they were repeated to us at home and in church, by books and images, in sacred rites, in every place and in a thousand ways, for in the society in which we live, both public and private, everything speaks to us of Jesus Christ, everything calls to mind His teachings. It is therefore true in our case, more so than in the case of the Corinthians, that we have been enriched with all instruction and knowledge in Jesus Christ, or by means of what He has done for us. What use have we made of it? How have we shown our gratitude to God for so great

remittatur ad suum principium (per gratiarum actionem) cæleste profluvium, ut ulterius terræ refundatur" (In Cantic., Ser. xiii).

and so continuous a blessing? My dear friends, what answer will you make?

Let us listen again to the Apostle, who goes on to say: "*As the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.*" What is the meaning of this word: "*The testimony*" of Christ? Without doubt it means the teaching, the doctrine, the Gospel of Christ. And why is it called a testimony? Jesus Christ says in the Gospel that He was come to *bear witness* to what He had seen in the bosom of the Father, and He Himself is called a *witness;* the apostles are also called witnesses, and in their Letters and in the Acts of the Apostles they declare that they are witnesses of what they had seen and of what they had heard from Jesus Christ. The doctrine therefore of Jesus Christ, repeated by the apostles, preserved and perpetually preached by the Church is a *testimony.* And it is rightly called a *testimony,* for just as the facts, to which men bear witness, and to which they may not add and from which they may not subtract anything, are not invented or fashioned by them, so also the doctrine and Gospel of Jesus Christ was not invented or fashioned by Him, nor by the apostles, nor by the Church, nor may any one take a syllable from it or add a syllable to it, because it comes from God, is His work, wholly His, and like Him, unchangeable. The Gospel teaching is the testimony of Jesus Christ, of the apostles, and of the Church, and in passing from mouth to mouth, from book to book, is ever the same, and, like a ray of the sun's light passing through a thousand crystals, it loses nothing nor does it gain in the passage. "This testimony, or

the doctrine of Jesus Christ," St. Paul says, "is now established and confirmed in you, O Corinthians;" or in other words: "I give thanks to God that by my preaching the Faith of Jesus Christ is rooted and firmly rooted in you, and in it you have the greatest of all heavenly gifts."

Think again of this phrase of St. Paul: "*The testimony* or the faith of Christ, *is confirmed in you.*" St. Paul gives the Corinthians great praise in saying that they are firm in the Faith. Faith is the substance, or the support, or the foundation of things we hope for, and the evidence, that is, the motive why we hold as certain that which we see not and can not know by the sole light of reason. This is the Apostle's definition of faith.[1] Why do you admit that there is a sun, a moon, or the earth? Because you see them. Why do you admit that two parallel lines will never meet, that an effect must have a cause, that two and two make four? Because by the aid of reason you see that this must be so and can not be otherwise. Why do you admit that there is such a country as Japan, such a river as the Nile, such a kingdom as Brazil, although you have never seen any of them? Because a number of witnesses, who would not deceive you, and could not, tell you so both by word of mouth and in writing. Their statement is the basis of your belief and certainty. Now Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the whole Church make known to you a great number of doctrines which you can not comprehend; but they assure you that they are true; they ad-

[1] "Est fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium" (*Heb.* xi. 1).

duce in proof of their truth countless miracles of which there can be no question and which are as the voice of God; and why should not the affirmation of these witnesses, strengthened by so many splendid proofs, be sufficient to gain your full and perfect assent? You believe what two or three witnesses say to you, when they tell you that they have seen or heard it; and will you not believe what Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the Church say, when they tell you that they have seen and heard it?

Our faith, then, resting upon the word of Jesus Christ, of the apostles and martyrs, and of the Church, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, should be strong, steadfast, and immovable. God has said it, Jesus Christ has taught it, the Church repeats it to us; we do not, we can not ask more; we believe firmly and unhesitatingly. To waver or doubt concerning a truth which Jesus Christ teaches us by His Church, would be a most serious offense to Him, who is *"The Truth."* Hence, my friends, let our faith be strong and immovable, founded as it is upon a rock, which no one can stir or break, namely upon the Church, and therefore upon Jesus Christ Himself.

But let us return to our teacher, St. Paul, who goes on to say: *"So that nothing is wanting to you in any grace."* If the Gospel, or what is the same, the Faith, is so firmly rooted in you that it will withstand every assault and baffle every artifice, you will then possess with it every other good and every other gift. The reason is clear, since Our Lord tells us that a strong, living faith can move mountains, that it can do all things, that

all things are possible to him who believes. It begets hope, it kindles charity, it is the inspiration of good works, it forms saints, it sustains martyrs. Give me a man who has the faith of Abraham and you will find one who will be ready, if necessary, to sacrifice his son; who has the faith of St. Peter, and you will see him walk upon the waters; who has the faith of St. Paul, and you will see him die daily for Christ, daily offering and immolating himself for his Master. To you who have living faith nothing shall be wanting, says St. Paul; "*To you who wait for the manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*" What do all we, who believe in Jesus Christ, await? We await the manifestation of Jesus Christ; that is to say, His second coming as the supreme Judge, who will render to every one according to his works. In His first coming on earth Jesus Christ scattered the seed, which goes on continually spreading among us; this is indeed a stupendous work, but it is mostly hidden, for who can see faith or grace in the heart? No one. We may see some of its fruits, but not all and only rarely, and at times even these are deceptive. At the end of time the Supreme Judge will manifest Himself in all the greatness of His glory; and then by Him and through Him amid the splendors of His infinite light, will be revealed all our works, good and bad, and judgment, irrevocable judgment, will be passed. This will be the manifestation by excellence, the manifestation of Jesus Christ, of His grace and providence, and the manifestation of our lives, so that nothing in heaven or on earth will remain that is not clear.

"Who also will confirm you unto the end without crime in the day of the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ." It only remains to explain the last verse. Jesus Christ by His grace and most firm faith will keep you strong in the midst of the trials and conflicts of this life even to the end, even unto death, keeping you clean of every crime, until the day of reward, which will be yours at His coming.

This is the gift of final perseverance, which none of you can merit, just as you could not merit the first grace. God begins the work of our salvation and He begins it with His grace without any merit on our part; He continues it, but with our co-operation; and He finishes it by giving us the crown or the fruit of His grace. The happy completion of our course, the finishing of our days in the grace and friendship of God, is His gift, but it is a gift which in His mercy He denies to none of His children, provided they on their part do what they can to secure it. No, God does not work as men do, who at times set their hand to something and then leave it, begin a house and leave off when it is half built; when He begins a work, in as far as depends on Him, He continues it and carries it on to completion. If it remains incomplete, it is so contrary to His will and because of the fault of another. It is not like God to begin a work and leave it imperfect, because He Himself is perfection and He makes all things perfect in heaven and on earth. Now there is no question but that He began the work of our salvation, because we have been baptized and every one here has received the first grace; it is therefore beyond

all doubt that He wishes to continue this work, and to complete it with that greatest and best gift, the gift of perseverance. Shall we have this gift, the crown of all others? Shall we be found on the last day, at the last moment of our lives, without sin, luminous with grace, the friends and children of God? God alone knows; but we know that God wishes this and that it depends upon us whether or not we shall then be found truly such. Let no one worry and distress himself, saying: Shall I persevere unto the end? Shall I die in God's grace? Why should a Christian trouble himself and pine away thinking thus? Do as St. Peter bids you, cast your cares upon God. God has created you; God abounds and superabounds in grace; He loves you as a father, nay even as a mother loves her children, and He died to save you. Why, then, do you fear? You say: I fear myself; I fear my weakness; I fear my passions. It is proper that you should fear yourself, but you should not allow your fear to trouble you overmuch and to oppress you. Bear in mind always that God knows your weakness far better than you do, and that as is your weakness so will be the aid of His grace; and keep this truth in mind as certain: The good God will never deny His grace to one who on his part does what he can.

HOMILY XII

At that time: Entering into a boat, He passed over the water and came into His own city. And behold they brought to Him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their

faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the Scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say: Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then said He to the man sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men.—Gospel, *Matt.* ix. 1-8.

From Capharnaum Jesus withdrew to a barren spot on the eastern shore of the Lake of Tiberias or Genesareth, there to rest awhile with His disciples; thence going down a hill and finding a leper, He healed him; next, while still on the eastern shore of the lake, he freed two who were possessed of devils and who belonged to the little town of Gerasa. Being rudely asked to depart by the citizens, who were frightened on seeing the miracle He had wrought, He crossed over to the western shore of the lake to make a second visitation of the synagogues of Galilee. Here begins the Gospel narrative to which Holy Church directs our attention on this Sunday, the eighteenth after Pentecost. The fact, or to speak more accurately, the miracle, recorded in to-day's Gospel is very important and therefore demands, and is worthy of, your undivided attention.

"*Jesus entering into a boat passed over the*

water and came into His own city." It may be said that about half the public life of Jesus was passed along the shores of this blessed lake, now going up and down on land, now crossing and recrossing its waters. It was the Lake of Galilee, His native country, and its position, its climate, its grassy shores, ever green and breezy, and the numerous and beautiful towns and villages mirrored in its blue waters, all contributed to make it a spot of transcendent beauty. There Jesus had found His chief apostles, for the people of Galilee had simple hearts, upright souls, sturdy temperaments, and a manly independence. He trusted to them more than to the people of Jerusalem, in whom it was but natural to find the defects and vices of a capital city, its weakness of character, its luxury and effeminacy. Having landed on the western shore of the lake, the Gospel does not say at what point, He came into His own city.

St. Jerome and others think that by the words *His own* the Evangelist means Nazareth, the country of Jesus; but the Gospel context and most interpreters lead us to believe that the city called *His own* is Capharnaum. Jesus called it His own because He frequently stayed there; He preached there and there He wrought many of His miracles; He bestowed upon it special tokens of His love and in one place in the Gospel He speaks of it as "*exalted unto heaven.*" Still this did not prevent Capharnaum from being rejected, for as Christ Himself said: "*Thou shalt be thrust down to hell*"; and the very marked favors which it received were precisely those which made it more

guilty and worthy of greater reprobation. This is an example of divine justice, which punishes more severely those who receive greater favors and tokens of divine mercy. Shall it ever come to pass, my dear friends, that Italy, our fatherland, so favored of heaven and privileged beyond other nations in having within it the Vicar of Jesus Christ, shall merit the chastisement that came upon Capharnaum, His own city? Shall it ever come to pass that the Faith shall depart from our land as it has from so many others? I hope that by the mercy of God such a misfortune will never befall us, and that the light and divine strength, that come forth from the Church of Peter, will ever keep the Faith alive in our country. But I can not hide from myself the great and tremendous work of disintegration which has already taken place among us, and which is still going forward at frightful leaps and bounds. The higher schools have become centers from which emanate indifference and unbelief; the press day by day makes assaults upon the ancient faith; and in the great marts of commerce, in the hives of industry and the swirl of public life, religion is not thought of, and a society without God or morality is in process of formation. I am terror-stricken when I look forward to the religious future of Italy. There will indeed be Catholics, but how many? and what kind? Possibly it may be a mixed society, not of Catholics and heretics, but of Catholics, indifferentists, and unbelievers of every grade.

Jesus returned to Capharnaum[1] after an ab-

[1]Mark ii. 1.

sence of some days. The memory of the miracles which He had formerly wrought there and the report of those wrought by Him on the shores of the lake and everywhere He went, drew after Him great crowds as soon as the news of His coming had got abroad, and they thronged the door of the house into which He had entered.[1] We do not know whose house this was, nor is it important to know;[2] but a general observation, which I have already made, may be profitably repeated here.

There were three classes of people gathered about Jesus: the disciples; the common people; and the educated—that is, the well-to-do, the priests, the chiefs of the people, the Doctors, and the Pharisees. We put aside the disciples, who little by little were formed on the great lessons of their Master.

The common people are ever the same, the same now as in the time of Christ. They are open, frank, generous, and, left to themselves, they are fond of novelty and readily seek it and pursue it if they see in it any material advantage or aught to excite their surprise. It is hardly to be wondered at that the people, carried away by the charm of the words and teaching of Christ and amazed at seeing His miracles, should have applauded Him and followed Him everywhere, even into the desert, and have conceived the thought of declaring Him their king.

The third class of persons represents authority

[1]Mark ii. 2, 3.

[2]Some think, and among them Bonghi (c. lii.), that it was Peter's house, possibly, but the Gospel does not say so.

and tradition. They were naturally jealous of this extraordinary man, who drew the multitude after Him; who in their very midst propagated new and strange doctrines; who threatened wholly to transform religion and society, and to relegate them to impotence and isolation. Fancy some one launching a new and fruitful idea in the midst of a decadent society and developing a strange moral and intellectual force. At once the representatives of the old order of things that is passing away begin to awake as if from a slumber; they are alarmed and rise up in defense of the past, whose interests they fancy are their own; they set themselves to combat the innovator, to discredit and calumniate him, and, if they must be rid of him, they are not scrupulous as to the means they employ. Although man is made for progress, he often resists it; and in the conflict between the men of the past and the men of the future are developed the forces which lead on to progress and regulate it. Ordinarily men of progress must suffer, and not unfrequently they become the victims of their mission and pay with their lives for daring to break with the past and become the pioneers of the race. This is what happened, and must necessarily have happened, to the divine Innovator and Restorer of humanity, the Man-God, Jesus Christ.[1] And hence we see growing up about Christ, besides the group of disciples and a multitude full of enthusiasm, a dominant class, tenacious of the past, who watch Him, spy upon Him, follow Him, put captious questions to Him, and strive to stifle the new doctrine. And

[1] See Didon, vol. i. p. 305 et seq.

this is luminously illustrated by the Gospel miracle of which we are speaking.

As we have said, Jesus entered into the house, or more accurately into an upper room called the *cenacle*.[1] He was surrounded by His apostles and by as many others as the room could contain; still others were crowded together in the courtyard and about the entrance. Among His listeners were many Doctors of the Law, either Scribes or Pharisees, and their purpose you may easily divine.[2] While He was speaking four men came up, carrying a poor paralytic on a bed and endeavoring to force a passage through the crowd, in order to present him to Jesus that He might heal him. Here it is well to complete the narrative of St. Matthew, which I have read for you, by adding some interesting and touching particulars given by St. Mark and St. Luke.[3] Those who carried the paralytic saw that it would be difficult, if not impossible to reach Jesus by forcing a passage through the crowded courtyard and stairway. What was to be done? They resolved to carry him up by the outside stairway that led to the roof

[1]A Hebrew dwelling usually consisted of a ground floor and an upper story. In the latter there was a large room into which the Hebrews retired to pray and to speak of things relating to God and to religion, and this room was called the *cenacle* (See Acts x. 9). "There was only one story, roofed over with a covering of dried earth and brambles, over which tiles were laid. In the front about the center was a large room that looked out on a court, the latter surrounded by a wall, in which was the entrance door. Usually there was a stairway on the outside leading up to the roof, so that it was not necessary to go through the court."—BONGHI, c. v. p. 2.

[2]St. Luke tells us that the Doctors and the Pharisees came from every village and town of Galilee, from Judea and even from Jerusalem, so great was the fame of the name of Jesus.

[3]Mark ii. 1, et seq. Luke v. 17, et seq.

and from there let him down into the room where Jesus was. They straightway carried up the bed with the paralytic, tore off the tile, broke through the ceiling, and by ropes let down the bed, on which the paralytic lay, into the presence of Jesus and into the midst of the throng crowded about Him. It is easy to fancy what a scene there was in that room when they saw the bed on which lay the helpless paralytic—the curiosity, the surprise, the whisperings, the comments, and the supreme expectation as to what Jesus would do. The moment was a solemn one. Jesus interrupted His discourse, and seeing the faith of the paralytic and of those who had brought him and let him down before Him, turning to the paralytic, He said: *"Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee."*

It may seem strange that Jesus, after having seen the faith of the paralytic and of those who had carried him, should say to the paralytic, as if he had not faith, and as if He wished to evoke it in him; *"Son, be of good heart."* But it is clear that by using the words: *"Be of good heart,"* He wished only to strengthen and increase his confidence and to assure him that his wish for a prompt healing would be gratified. It was as if He should say: "Son, rejoice, be strong and trustful, and I shall heal you;" such was the meaning of our Saviour's words. That word *Son,* which Jesus must have uttered with an indescribable accent of love, leads us to understand and feel how tender His heart was; and teaches us how we should receive and treat the suffering, how we should soften their pains and comfort them in their dis-

tress.[1] When we reflect that Jesus treated a poor paralytic with such familiarity and affectionate delicacy, should we not blush to deal harshly and rudely with our brother man, who comes to us asking aid, counsel, and comfort in his affliction?

"*Thy sins are forgiven thee,*" said Jesus to the paralytic. What, O Lord? This poor paralytic has not asked pardon for his sins; he has asked silently the cure of his body, and Thou givest him the former and not the latter. Thou givest what has not been asked of Thee, and payest no heed to what has been asked. And canst Thou pardon the sins, O Lord, of one who is not repentant? Certainly, God is omnipotent, but He can not pardon sin where there is no repentance, for sin is not cancelled unless the soul, touched by grace, is detached from it; but if it is not detached from it, and it is not unless it repents, the sin remains and God must thrust from Him a soul that is stained with it.[2] It must be supposed, then, that the paralytic, inundated by grace through the presence and by the words of Jesus, repented of his sins, and it may be, though of this and many other incidents the Evangelist says nothing, asked pardon for them by word of mouth, and hence Jesus could say: "*Thy sins are forgiven.*" He would have the healing of the soul precede the healing of the body, thus teaching us that we should make more of the former than of the latter, that bodily

[1] "Omnia humilitas! Despectum et debilem, totis membrorum compagibus dissolutum, filium vocat, quem sacerdotes non dignabantur attingere."—St. Hieronym. in hunc locum, apud A Lapide.

[2] Here there is question not of original sin, which being contracted without our will, is also cancelled without it in Baptism. But actual sin can not be remitted unless the will, by the aid of grace, repents and casts it out.

infirmities are frequently the consequences of the sickness of the soul, and that their cure should commence with the cure of the soul.[1]

There can be no doubt that at the very instant in which Jesus uttered the words: "*Thy sins are forgiven thee,*" the soul of the paralytic was cleansed from the leprosy of all sin and clad with the beauty of grace. This is a fact which we should bear in mind when we ask for temporal favors; before asking of God the gifts of earth we should ask of Him the still more valuable gifts of heaven, before asking for health of the body we should ask for health of the soul,[2] and in this way we shall be more likely to get the temporal goods we so much desire.

This Gospel fact leads us to believe that Jesus Christ, always before healing the body, first healed the soul; that before freeing the sick from their infirmities He first freed sinners from their bonds; for it is but seemly that one, who gave so munificently of what was only relatively important, should give still more munificently of what was beyond all else necessary. Were it otherwise, there would seem a lack of harmony in His works, since in that case He would be more solicitous for the healing of the body than for the healing of the soul.

Some of the Scribes present hearing the words,

[1]Jesus Christ said to the man whom He healed of an infirmity under which he had been for eight and thirty years (John v. 14.): "*Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.*" These words seem to imply that his infirmity was a consequence of his disorders.

[2]"Sæpe morbi velut quædam peccatorum flagella sunt, quibus nihil aliud agitur, nisi ut vitam nostrum in melius commutemus." —St. Basil, Reg. 55.

"*Thy sins are forgiven thee,*" turned to one another surprised and scandalized, and whether from respect for Our Lord or from fear of the people or from some other motive which we know not, they did not say openly, "*He blasphemes,*" but the thought was in their hearts. St. Mark in narrating the same fact gives the motive of this internal judgment, adding that they said in their hearts: "*Who can forgive sins but God only?*" And in itself what they said was true, since only the offended can pardon the offense, and if sins are offenses against God, as they are, it is clear that only God can remit them. But they should have remembered that God can pardon sins either directly Himself or indirectly through the agency of others to whom He has given the power. Hence, even supposing that Jesus Christ had not been God, as the Scribes maintained, their statement: "*He blasphemes,*" was precipitate and might be wholly false, because, even as a simple man, He might have had from God the power of forgiving sin in His name, such as priests have and exercise.

Jesus at once set about proving to these Scribes that He could forgive sin and that they, in judging Him a blasphemer, did Him an atrocious wrong; and they themselves gave the proof. "*Jesus,*" says St. Matthew, "*seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts?*" thus showing that He read their thoughts, that He was God,[1] and that being God

[1]Certainly it is possible to man and angels, illuminated by God, to read and know one's hidden thoughts, and hence this is not a peremptory proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ; but speaking in the concrete, since He showed that He knew their interior thoughts, He showed also that He was at least illuminated by

He could remit sin. You know that according to Catholic teaching no one, neither man nor demon nor angel, can know what goes on in our minds or in our hearts, unless either we make it known to them or God reveals it; at most they can have only a vague and uncertain knowledge, no more than a guess, an inference from external signs and circumstances. When, then, Jesus proved to the Scribes that He read their minds and hearts, He proved to them also that He was a prophet, that He was what He claimed to be, namely God, and that He had power to remit sin.[1] To this bold affirmation of Jesus, by which He showed that even what man guards most impenetrably in the depths of his soul is open to Him and naked, the Pharisees and Scribes seem to have attached little importance, or at least they showed no surprise. As upon so many other occasions under similar circumstances, they were disdainfully silent and concealed their feelings.

Permit me here, my friends, to call your attention to an elementary truth of our faith. The Scribes and the Pharisees did not admit that Jesus, to whom they were speaking, was truly God; it was a fault and a most serious one, after all they had seen and heard from Him; we on the contrary know by reason and faith that He sees everything; that nothing can escape His divine glance, not even a single thought or a single af-

God and that He was a prophet, and this was sufficient to prove to the Scribes that they were obliged to listen to His words; and since again He affirmed that He was God, they were in duty bound to believe that He was God. This is evident.

[1] "Eadem potentia et majestate, qua cogitationes vestras intueor, possum et hominibus peccata dimittere."—St. Hieronymus.

fection, even though its passing were as lightning; we know also and we believe that we must render a most strict account to Him of everything, because our every act is written in the book of our conscience under His very eyes; and we know also that He is at once our witness and our judge, and in spite of this, what do we do? We still continue to caress and excite those thoughts and affections which we know to be guilty and abominable, and to caress them under the very eyes of God, who detests them, thus acting as if we believe that the eyes of God are not upon us. If this great truth of faith, namely that the eye of God is ever open, searching our minds and hearts, were always living and present in our thoughts, how many sins would cease to be committed! How spotless would be our conscience, how irreproachable our conduct! The very presence of a person whom we respect is enough to make us properly regulate our external acts, and will not the consciousness of the presence of God be sufficient to make us regulate the thoughts of our mind and the affections of our heart? Whenever there arise in the soul thoughts wholly unworthy of a Christian and affections crowd the heart that destroy its peace, let us reflect that Jesus will say to us, as He said to the Scribes and Pharisees: *"Why do you think evil in your hearts?"*

Continuing His discourse and still addressing the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus added: *"You are scandalized at My words to this paralytic and you think Me a blasphemer; now answer Me: Whether is it easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say: Arise and walk?"* You see it was a formid-

able question and forced His enemies to an alternative they could not escape. He was ready to prove His power to forgive sins by a miracle, by instantly healing the paralytic, who was there stretched on the bed, pale and trembling in the presence of them all. What could they reply? If they said: "No, we will not accept the miracle," they would have confessed themselves beaten, and the crowd, impatient to witness the miracle, would have pursued them with insult and contumely. If they said: "We accept the test," they would have to recognize Jesus as the Messias and the Son of God, which they would never consent to do. There was only one possible way of saving themselves, not from defeat, but from the still greater humiliation of being forced to confess the divinity of Christ, and that was silence, and to this they had recourse.

Jesus looked around upon the crowd and upon the silent Scribes and Pharisees, and then turning to the paralytic, who hung upon His words, said: "*That you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.*" In that very instant, at the sound of those omnipotent words, the paralytic felt a stream of strength pouring into his body, a new life coming to him; his limbs grew sound and supple, his countenance glowed with health and vigor, he cast away his covering, leaped to his feet, and having, as we may well suppose, adored and thanked Jesus, he took up his bed and went on his way happy and rejoicing. The crowd and even the Scribes and Pharisees, amazed beyond measure, gazed now at Jesus and now at the

paralytic and could hardly believe their eyes. The miracle bore upon it every mark of evidence; to deny it or to doubt it would be folly; it would be to close the eyes to the light of the sun. But did the Scribes and Pharisees submit, did they acknowledge their error, did they cast themselves at the feet of Jesus and confess that He was the Messias and the Son of God? The Gospel says not a word about them, but it is easy to infer from the context that they remained stubbornly obstinate and departed filled with anger and scorn. Their blindness was marvelous and inconceivable, but still it should not surprise us. When any passion, and more particularly the passion of hatred, or self-interest, or pride, not to speak of others, takes possession of the heart of man, there is no misdeed, no crime, no obstacle that can stop him; a man who is a slave to a passion is like an angel of darkness, who sees and knows that he is impotent against God, and yet hates Him and wages everywhere and always a relentless war against Him. My friends, be on your guard against every passion, but above all against the passion of pride, which is the root of every sin.

Jesus Christ made use of a phrase which seemingly contains a difficulty and which it is well to clear up. From His words it would seem that it is easier to forgive sin than to heal a paralytic, for He says: *"Is it easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise and walk?"* The question is put as if it were to be answered in the negative.

To remit sin is of itself much more difficult than to heal the sick, because the remission of sin re-

quires an infusion of grace, which is a supernatural gift and belongs to God alone, and because it also requires a change of will in the sinner, who can resist and render impossible every effort in his behalf; but I think that when Jesus Christ uttered those words He had no thought of making a comparison between the remitting of sin and the healing of the paralytic, or of saying that the former was easier than the latter; He was reasoning with men and He spoke to them as to men. Some of them were dull, and would naturally think it more difficult to heal the paralytic than to remit sin; others were proud and obstinate, and while they cared little for things invisible, they could not be equally indifferent to visible things and notably to a miracle. Hence in using those words Jesus only intended to show by the miracle of the paralytic, which appealed to those there present more than could the remission of sin, that His authority was sovereign and divine. "You will not believe My words," He seems to say, "when I pardon this unhappy man's sins, because you can not verify it by sense; believe, then, this miraculous cure; deny it if you can." This is the sense of the words of the divine Saviour.

The effect of this miracle on all those who had seen it or heard of it in all Capharnaum was tremendous, and the Gospel says that "*the multitude feared.*" This fear was quite natural, for when we see a fact, which has no natural cause and yet is itself beyond question, we are forced to trace it up to the First Cause, to the Supreme Cause, in a word, to God. Such is a miracle, and hence

at the sight of a miracle we feel ourselves in the presence of an infinite force or power, of God Himself, who is at work under our very eyes. How is it possible not to be seized with amazement, and dread, and holy fear, when in the presence of God, the Supreme Being and the Infinite Majesty? The people were filled with fear, but it was a fear which was suddenly turned into a shout of joy and a hymn of glory: *"They glorified God who had given such power to men."* Here are two sentiments most natural to man in the presence of God: fear, but a filial fear, for God is always a Father; and gratitude and love, which find expression in thanksgiving, in praise and glory, the only tribute we can render to God.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XIII

BRETHREN: Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil. He that stole, let him now steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need.—EPISTLE, *Eph.* iv. 23-28.

THESE beautiful and practical admonitions are taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Church at Ephesus and from that part of the Epistle which is almost wholly devoted to moral teaching. And here I may begin with a remark that will serve as my apology in these and other comments which I shall make on the Epistle. St. Paul in writing his Letters generally aimed at providing for some special needs of the churches or of the persons to whom he wrote, to give them timely admonitions, or again, to correct certain disorders and to remove certain dangers. In these Letters, as is natural, general recommendations abound, and hence now and then there flow from the pen of the Apostle the same truths, the same exhortations, the same moral maxims, applicable to all

classes of persons and to every time and place. When, then, I come frequently upon the same truths, the same exhortations and moral maxims of the Apostle, what am I to do? Pass them over? No; for then I should neglect to explain truths which the Church urges upon the faithful, and I have no right to do this. They are repetitions, it will be said, and often of things that are very familiar. I know it, but what of it? Should I correct the action of the Church and pass over what she wants brought home to her children? Never. If the Apostle thought it necessary to repeat these truths in his Letters and the Church directs that they shall be read, my duty is to follow the teaching both of the one and the other, confident that I shall be doing what is right and holy. If the repetition of the same truths was useful at the time of the apostles, why should it not be useful in our day? Do we not eat the same bread day by day, and it never nauseates us? Similarly, we nourish our souls on the same food and they never tire of it; rather they find in it solid nutriment. And now for our text.

The Apostle having earnestly called upon his spiritual children to grow into the likeness of the perfect manhood of Christ, to model themselves upon Him and to come out from the corruption of Paganism in which they had lived and in which they must continue to live to their great peril, goes on to exhort them to put off the old man, or the man of corruption, of passion and sin, and to clothe themselves with the new, as he was remade in Jesus Christ—and here begins our explanation.

"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The soul of man acts and grows to maturity by the two noble faculties of mind and will, which make man what he is and constitute his greatness and dignity. The mind is made for truth, the will for happiness. Our soul first seeks truth and through truth secures happiness. In order that man may reach his perfection he must first of all know the truth, and, once this is known, his will, if it be upright, will adjust itself to it, will love it, put it in practice, and thus find itself in possession of happiness. The first duty of man is to know the truth; the next, to act in conformity with it. This is why Jesus, wishing to lead men on to happiness, to make them virtuous and perfect, directed that they should first be taught to know the truth, and hence His precept to His apostles: *"Teach all nations." "Preach the Gospel to every creature."* And hence also the Apostle admonishes the Ephesians: *"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind"*—that is: renew your mind with the spirit of truth, which Jesus Christ has brought you; embellish it with the knowledge of divine truth, and you will thus make it new again and beautiful in the sight of God. The body when tastefully dressed looks well, and has an added grace and dignity; the vesture of the soul and its most beautiful adornment is truth, which illuminates it and gives it form and character. This phrase of the Apostle is almost a repetition of another to the Romans,[1] to whom he says: *"Be reformed in the newness of your mind,* receiving among you the truth and divine grace, which are new to you."

[1]Rom. xii. 2.

The next verse will still better reveal the mind of the Apostle.

He says: "*Put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth.*" I have said this before, but it is necessary to repeat it. Who is the new man? Undoubtedly it is Adam, the first man, for as a building or a house is new as soon as it is completed, so also was the man new when he came from the hands of God. Who is the old man? He who became so later, he who marred himself, just as a house is old which goes to decay in the course of time. When, then, St. Paul bids us *renew* ourselves, he means that we should become like the first man, like Adam, when he came from the hands of the Creator. What was his state then? He was *created according to God,* that is, he was dear to God, bore His likeness upon his forehead; he was his son by adoption, because he was adorned with justice or sanctifying grace, and was therefore truly holy.[1] The mission of Christ, who, to use the beautiful phrase of St. Paul, is the second Adam, or the second father of the human race, "*from heaven, heavenly,*"[2] consists in remaking all men according to the pattern of the first, restoring to them grace and divine life and an entire mastery over their passions, all of which is effected by Baptism and the other means of salvation, which complete the work of our regeneration. To put on the new man and to renew ourselves in spirit, means to revive within us, in as far as our frailty will allow, Adam in his inno-

[1]The phrase of St. Paul: Qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitia et *sanctitate veritatis,* is a Hebraism, equivalent to in *sanctitate vera.*

[2]1 Cor. xv. 47.

cence, rich in heavenly gifts and bearing upon him the image and likeness of God. It means to have the mind filled with truth and the heart filled with grace and love, and to make our words, our acts, and works a living expression of the life of Adam,[1] and hence of that of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. What a dignity and what a greatness, considered in the light of these divine truths, to reproduce in ourselves the first man in his innocence, to be just and holy in God's sight; "*In justice and holiness of truth.*"

Let us listen again to St. Paul: "*Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbor.*" The old man, the man of sin, the man of concupiscence and flesh, is wholly contrary to the new man, the man of virtue, of spiritual grace, and we, who bear both within us, must labor incessantly to lay aside the first and to clothe ourselves with the second. Having set forth in a general way the duties that are incumbent upon us, St. Paul in this and the following verses specifies the works of the old man which we should lay aside, and those of the new which we should practise. The first work of the old man which the Apostle wants laid aside is lying—"*putting away lying.*" I confess when I was a young man and read the sentence of the Psalm, "*Every man is a liar,*" I was tempted to think it an exaggeration and to accept it in a broad sense, but the practical knowledge of men has taught me that unfortunately it is true in the strict sense. Good

[1]Some Fathers hold that this man, *qui creatus est secundum Deum*, is Jesus Christ Himself. The words can be so understood and St. Jerome so understands them, saying: *Induite novum*

God, who is the man who has not told a lie in the course of his life in speech or writing, or even by silence, for one can also lie by being silent? How often have we been deceived, how often have we deceived others, from motives of interest or passion, putting a wide or narrow interpretation on words, or even affirming in word what we mentally denied? And is not the secret of deception among some now reduced to an art? We, who are taught in the school of Jesus Christ, in the school of truth, who said: *"Let your speech be Yea, Yea, and No, No,"* should fly from and abominate any sort of lying.

To the work of the old man, or to lying, St. Paul according to his custom at once opposes the work of the new man, saying: *"Speak the truth, every man with his neighbor."* This is a duty laid upon all of us without exception, from which even God could not dispense us, though He is the absolute Lord. St. Paul at once goes on to give a special reason why we are obliged to tell the truth, namely, *"because we are members one of another."* We are all brothers and members of that body of which Christ is the supreme head. How could you have the heart to deceive your brother? St. Paul seems to ask. Would one eye injure the other? or one hand wound the other? Would one foot not support the other? Every member of the body aids another. Now if you do not speak the truth, you betray your brother and you violate the law of nature, which lays a duty upon all the mem-

hominem, id est, Jesum Christum. But it seems to me preferable for many reasons to understand this *novum hominem* as meaning Adam.

bers of the same body respectively to aid one another.

But you will say: If we speak the truth we shall suffer for it. Possibly you may suffer in body, but not in spirit. And suppose you do? If to escape a material injury or loss, even a serious one, it were permitted to lie, there would be no sin, no matter how enormous, that might not in certain cases be committed.

If it were permitted to lie to avoid some great impending danger or to save life or honor, we should not have a single martyr, for by telling a single lie they could have escaped death and not unfrequently obtained the most distinguished honors. The telling of the truth will never demand from us the sacrifice of our lives, but even if it did, we should imitate the martyrs and not hesitate an instant to do what would merit for us eternal glory.

Again, some say: Every one lies and to tell the truth is often to become a victim of another's malice. Well, granted that all lie, does a wrong cease to be such because all commit it? Because backbiting and incontinence, theft and blasphemy, and such are, unfortunately, common sins, are they on that account no longer sins and would we be excused before God in committing them? By no means. The law of God stands and does not change an iota; whoso observes it will be saved and whoso transgresses it will infallibly be punished. It is better to be the victim of the deceit of another than to merit the chastisements of God.

Let us go on to the next verse. *"Be angry and*

sin not.'' This sentence is taken from a Psalm[1] and needs explanation. Does this expression imply a precept, as the words *''Be angry,''* would seem to imply? Possibly in a sense they do. When we witness injustice, or shameless impiety, or the oppression of the poor and the betrayal of the innocent, we can not help feeling rising within us an emotion of anger and indignation; and it is this same feeling that revolts at and peremptorily reproves iniquity and crime. In this sense we read that God Himself grows angry and hates, as we understand the term; that is, He hates and abhors sin, wherever it may be; and in this sense, too, it may be said of a man: He is angry with you, that is, with your sin.

But the following interpretation seems to me more natural and more intelligible. Do you ever happen to get angry? Considering the weakness of our nature, so prone to anger, that will often happen. What is to be done? If anger rises up within you, repress it at once, so that you may not sin. The passions, and especially anger, often assault us unawares; we feel their rage and fury in our hearts, before we are conscious of their presence. This first ferment, which they stir up within us, inasmuch as it is not adverted to by the reason, and therefore not assented to by the will, is not and can not be sinful, because there is no sin where there is not full knowledge and deliberate consent. When, then, passion comes upon us unawares, or anger throws our whole being into a tumult, as soon as we advert to it, let the reason as well as the will come promptly to the rescue,

[1]Ps. iv. 5.

reduce the passions to obedience, check their unruly motions, and restore peace. This is why St. Paul after the words, "*Be angry and sin not,*" that is if you are angry, see that you do not sin, goes on to say: "*And let not the sun go down upon your anger.*" It is a beautiful image and teaches us that anger should be at once suppressed and cast out from the heart, so that it may not remain beyond the day.

My friends, turn your thoughts in upon your conscience. See if down in the secret foldings of your hearts there may not possibly be cherished a feeling of resentment, of rancor or hatred, against your brother; see if ever the anger of the day stayed with you until evening and into the night; if you took it with you to bed, caressing it and almost tasting the sweetness of revenge, and meditating the best means of securing it full and entire. If so, you have certainly not kept in mind the precept of the Apostle: "*Let not the sun go down upon your anger.*"[1]

This sentence follows: "*Give not place to the devil.*" This might stand by itself, and then its meaning would be that we should flee from all evil and shut the door of our heart against the devil, the author of evil; but I am of the opinion that it is a supplement to the words just explained and is connected with them. Thus, let not the sun go down upon your anger and you will cut off any ap-

[1] "Ego ex quo accepi habitum istum, non dimisi aliquem dormire qui habebat aliquid adversum me: nequeo ego dormire habens aliquid adversum aliquem."

So said St. Epiphanius, Bishop to St. Hilarion. What delicacy of conscience! What peace there would be on earth if all men observed the rule of the Apostle!

proach of the common enemy, the devil. If we cherish anger in the heart we shall experience the disastrous consequences of doing so. If but a spark falls into a heap of straw and wood, and is not at once extinguished, the fire will increase little by little and in a short time the whole house will be in flames. So also with anger; it is but a spark in the depths of the heart, but if not instantly put out it will break forth into a blaze of affronts and envies, of slander and calumny, of insult and contumely, of quarrels and blows and worse. Away, then, with anger, and having cast it out we shall have shut the door against the devil, the worker of all evil.

The Apostle goes on with his enumeration, always by way of antithesis, contrasting the works of the flesh, or of the old man, with the works of the spirit, or of the new man: "*He that stole, let him steal no more.*" This is a direct appeal to one of the chief commandments of the divine law. Many have an idea that they never violate this law, and they are impatient if their attention is called to it. We never touch what belongs to another, they say, and it may be strictly true, because they could not seize and carry off what belongs to another, except by force or open fraud. But if they reflect that this divine precept can be violated in many other ways, they may learn that they are not so innocent as they affect to believe. Loss and very serious loss, may be caused to another and yet not a penny's worth of his property come into our hands. Theft may be committed with the tongue by discrediting our neighbor; it may be committed by fraudulently exacting exces-

sive interest; by working, when we do less than we have agreed to work; by selling damaged or inferior goods; by not restoring things found; by promising and not fulfilling; by lying and calumniating; by not paying honest debts, or by making it impossible for us to do so; by injuring the good name of our neighbor; by unjustly preventing him from exercising his rights; by exacting an excessive price; by deceiving him and harming him in a hundred other ways, which, without increasing our store by a single penny, causes loss to our neighbor. In all these ways do we transgress the great precept, "Thou shalt not steal," and take from the rich, the poor, and the destitute. And are not those poor also thieves, who, though able to make a living by working, prefer to live by charity? And so also are those workmen who squander their money in saloons and force their wives to have recourse to public charity to feed and clothe their destitute children. If the precept, "*Thou shalt not steal,*" were properly understood, many who say, "I have never taken anything from my neighbor," would bow their heads in shame and confess to having unjustly caused loss to others and, it may be, considerable loss; and this is one of the many ways in which the Seventh Commandment may be transgressed. I believe that, as it is no exaggeration to say that every man is a liar, since the Holy Ghost says it, so neither is it an exaggeration to say that every man is more or less a thief, either because he takes what is another's, or because he causes him loss.

But the Apostle does not stop at forbidding his children to steal; he would have them first to be

free from evil and then to do good; hence he adds this beautiful admonition, directed to all without exception, which I could wish burned into your minds, so that it might never be forgotten: *"Let every one labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffers need."*

This is a touching and a sublime truth, promulgated by the Apostle, who labored with his own hands that he might gain wherewith to live and be a burden to no one, and that he might have also something to give to the poor. To labor, my friends, is a natural and a divine law, incumbent upon all, rich and poor, men and women, the feeble and the strong, the literate and the illiterate. No one is exempt from this great law, not even the wealthiest among men or the greatest monarch on earth. There are and should be divers kinds of labor; this the nature of things makes necessary; no one is exempt from this universal law. Would you know to what punishment the Apostle condemns the indolent? Listen and always keep it in memory: *"He who labors not, let him not eat."*

My friends, if we take a look through our cities and towns, if we enter into certain clubs and drawing-rooms and salons, how many do we find idle and indolent? How many rich and poor, men and women, waste their days and hours in shameless indolence, grow corrupt in vice, become votaries of pleasure, and die of laziness and lassitude! Shame! Every man, no matter what his condition, should remember, as Holy Job says, that, as the bird is born to fly, so man is born to

labor. Why are arms and hands given to you if not to labor? The innocent Adam labored in the abode of delights in which God had placed him; and do you, who are guilty and condemned to labor, which is both a penalty and an expiation, wish to escape it?[1]

But some one will say: "I need not work for a living." If you do not work you are a parasite, living at the expense of another, eating another's bread, and nourished by another's sweat. Shame on you! Do not think that you can escape the condemnation of St. Paul, which is the condemnation of God Himself. You have grown wealthy by the labor of others, your wealth is being dissipated in idleness, and you may yet see poverty come in at your threshold, and if you do not, your children will.

You need not work for a living; granted. Look about you and you will see many of your brothers, who, labor as they will, can hardly furnish food and clothing for their children; labor for them. I believe that before St. Paul, no one on this earth ever thought of laboring to supply the needs of the poor, much less did they exhort others to do so. It is a high and a noble idea, which could not spring up in the mind of man except in the light of the Gospel. It was in the school of Jesus Christ that Elizabeth of Thuringia, Blanche of

[1]The Israelites were an industrious people; they changed the sterile and rocky soil of Palestine into a rich and fertile country; and so true is this that, when they left it, it became again almost a desert. It was not a humiliation among the Hebrews, even among the wealthy and learned, to work with their hands at some trade. At the present day the princes of some royal houses learn a common trade, such as that of a smith or a joiner. The blush of shame should come to the cheek of every idler.

Castile, Hedwig of Silesia, and countless others were formed who, born to ease and placed upon the steps of a throne, toiled with their hands to clothe the poor. What is more beautiful or more worthy of man or woman, born to wealth, than, when not forced to labor for themselves, to labor for the orphan, the destitute, and the sick, and for the multitude of those who suffer on every side of us. This is a work of true brotherhood and equality, a holy and a Christian *socialism,* which will go far to disarm the socialism of violence and wickedness, and which all, no matter to what party they belong, will heartily bless. There is still living a noble English lady, the wife of a statesman, who, having gone over from Protestantism to the Catholic Church, rented out her big palace in order that she might support with the income a hundred orphans, and went herself to live in a corner of the building, where she toiled with her hands to put shoes upon the feet and clothes upon the backs of these poor children, whom she loved as her own. Miracles of charity have been inspired by the words of Jesus Christ and of His apostle, who said: "*Let every one labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffers need.*" To repeat the teaching of the Apostle: We should make every effort to cast off the old man, putting aside his works, which are lying, wrath, theft, and sloth; and to put on the new man, doing his works, which are a love of truth and sincerity, patience and meekness, respect for the property and rights of others, and love and generosity toward the struggling and those in want and misery.

HOMILY XIV

AT THAT *time Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying:* The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage. But they neglected: and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed these murderers, and burned their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.—GOSPEL, *Matt.* xxii. 2-14.

WHERE was this parable spoken by Jesus Christ? Undoubtedly in Jerusalem in the vestibule or under the portico of the Temple. When was it spoken? Without doubt during the last week of His life, and most likely on the Tuesday or Wednesday before His death. To whom was it addressed? To the people, but more directly to the Scribes and Pharisees, who plied Him with questions and employed every means to entrap Him. What was the scope of this parable? Jesus Christ, as His mission was drawing to an end, left nothing unsaid in His discourses, especially in Jerusalem, by which He might enlighten the Hebrews and show them the supreme necessity of believing in His words and mission. In a hundred ways He reminded them of the risk they were taking of being cast off by God and of having their inheritance given to the Gentiles. He seemed wholly intent on showing that He was leaving nothing undone to open their eyes to the truth, that if they persisted in their error the fault was entirely theirs, and that their obstinacy could not prevent the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth, since others, more docile than they, would accept His message. This is the purpose and scope of the parable, which I am about to explain to you.[1]

"And Jesus answering spoke again in parables." Comparing the parallel passages of all the Gospels, it would appear that the last days passed by Jesus in Jerusalem were almost wholly de-

[1]In St. Luke (xvi. 16-24) there is a parable very like this, and which I have elsewhere explained. But all things considered, it seems clear to me that the two are not identical; or if they are the same, the parable was spoken twice by Christ on different occasions and with some variations.

voted to discourses and animated discussions with the Scribes and Pharisees. St. Matthew here seems to give us to understand that, before beginning to speak the parable, Jesus had taken a short respite, for He says: "*And Jesus answering spoke again,*" and spoke in parables. This was a favorite method of teaching with Jesus and one much in use among the Hebrews, who had a fondness for it. It serves wonderfully well to give concrete form to truths and to make them stand out in relief, and its use among ourselves, especially in instructing the people, would be very beneficial. Here follows the parable:

"*The kingdom of heaven is like to a king who made a marriage-feast for his son.*" *The kingdom of heaven* here clearly signifies that kingdom which Jesus Christ came on earth to establish, which He calls His kingdom and into which all must enter who hope to enter into the kingdom of heavenly glory. Whom does this king, who wishes to make a feast or give a great banquet for the marriage of His Son, represent? Undoubtedly, God the Father. Of whom is the son, whose marriage-feast it is, an image? Of the only-begotten of the Father, the divine Word made man. What does this marriage signify? The unspeakable union of the divine Word with human nature and then with the Church, which St. Paul in his Letters and St. John in the Apocalypse figuratively call His Spouse. The term is beautiful and appropriate, for no image could better symbolize the mystery of the Incarnation and the intimate and sublime relations of Jesus Christ with His Church. Before going on to the application of the parable

it will not be out of place to note that all those who lived by faith, hoping for the coming of the Messias, whether within the Synagogue or outside of it, belonged to the Church of Christ and were, so to say, the forerunners of the Church. The Church, in its widest sense, includes all believers both of the Old Covenant and the New, from Adam to the last Christian who will live upon the earth, because all who have been saved, either before or since His coming, are saved through His merits, through faith in Him, and because He is the Saviour of all, the one and only mediator between God and man, and there is no salvation except in His sole name.

The custom of celebrating marriages with rejoicing and splendid banquets, according to the means of the participants, is as old as the world, and to this Sacred Scripture bears ample testimony. Men have always felt the need of celebrating a happy event with external signs of rejoicing, with music, singing, and dancing, but especially with feasting. These are the ways in which they manifest their joy, and they enhance it by inviting others, especially friends and relatives, to share it with them. Now marriage is a happy event, because it consecrates the greatest of earthly bonds and because it is established by nature, and therefore by God Himself, as the one means of laying the foundation of the family and of preserving human society. Would that these feasts were such as the spirit of Christ would have them to be, and that the rejoicing, legitimate in itself, were always accompanied with temperance, modesty, and discretion, and with a consciousness

of the new and mighty duties the bridegroom and bride take upon themselves.

"*The king sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage and they would not come.*" God in His mercy calls all men to the marriage-feast, that is, to the Faith of His Son, and He calls them in an infinity of ways. He called them in the beginning by the teachings of home, which were handed on from father to son in the age of the Patriarchs, and were necessarily spread over all the earth. Who can doubt that Adam and Eve so taught their children, and these again their children and grandchildren, the truths of faith? Who can doubt that these teachings of the home and by word of mouth could be and were preserved in every family throughout the whole human race, especially when we consider that some of the Patriarchs lived to the age of eight or nine hundred years?[1] This was the first call given to all men, who should in virtue of a faith common to all have sat down at the marriage-feast. Not content with this first call God gave others to Abraham and Isaac, to Jacob and the Patriarchs; and these also failing of their purpose, He gave countless others through Moses and the written law, through prophets and priests. These calls, though given to the chosen people, could not be limited to them; they were diffused among neighboring peoples and carried into far-distant lands by the dispersion of Israel throughout the East and West. And how did men receive the call?

[1]Every one knows how in these days the extremely long life of the Patriarchs is explained. One explanation is that the 800 or 900 years refer not to the individuals, but rather to the families.

What answer did they make to God's invitation? Some few in Israel and beyond its borders came to the feast; but the greater number "*would not come.*"

Then God, like a merciful and loving father, "*sent other servants, saying to those that were invited: Behold I have prepared my feast, my beeves and fatlings*[1] *are killed and all things are ready; come to the marriage.*" This earnest invitation, which seems an affectionate entreaty, should, I think, be referred to the time of Christ, to the mission of John Baptist and to his call, which the great majority of the Hebrews obstinately refused to heed. It is true Jesus does not speak distinctly of Himself in this parable, but a short time before He did speak of Himself in the parable of the vine-dressers, who killed the son of the lord of the vineyard sent to collect the vintage. The scope and teaching of these parables are the same.

From these repeated invitations given by God to mankind as a whole and in particular to the Hebrew people, we should gather some truths of great importance.

As no one may come to a feast unless he has first been invited by the master of the house, so no one can come to the Faith or enter into the kingdom of Heaven unless called by divine grace. Grace precedes every act of ours and without grace it is impossible to take a single step along the way to heaven; and hence it is clear that God, the King, must first give the call to the banquet. And how is the call given? It is given through

[1]The word *altilia* does not mean here birds, as some think. *Alta,* from *alere,* means animals fed and fattened for a feast.

servants sent in His name, through prophets and apostles and those who continue their ministry. To this external call is, of course, added the internal call of grace, without which the first would be useless. Consider the words which the king puts into the mouths of His servants: "*Tell the invited, behold I have prepared my dinner, all things are ready, come ye to the marriage-feast.*" They reveal how lively and intense is God's desire to save us and to make us eternally happy. Of this happiness the marriage-feast is a figure, and if we do not attain it the fault will be wholly our own, since though called and entreated, we have refused to listen and have allowed the great grace to pass unused.

Jesus, continuing the parable, says: "*They neglected and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise.*" Not to accept, or worse still, to pay no attention to a gracious invitation, sent by a king, is an affront and a vulgar insult, as every one knows, and this is what they, who were invited to the feast, were guilty of. They preferred to the honor which was offered them, to go into the country and to look after their business; that is, they preferred to amuse and enjoy themselves elsewhere and to give themselves to the accumulation of wealth. Thus did the Hebrews act and thus also, sad to say, many Christians act. Jesus Christ called the children of Israel to the marriage-feast, to the possession of true goods, to the holy joys of the spiritual kingdom and life eternal, but they longed only for the goods of this world, they yearned for a temporal kingdom, for earthly glory, for the liberty of the body rather

than for that of the spirit, and thus by their own act they shut themselves out from the banquet of the King.

My friends, we are amazed and indignant at the ill-bred refusal of the Hebrews, and should we not be still more amazed and indignant at the more reprehensible refusal of many among us to respond to the loving calls that come to us from God? There are many among us, particularly of the well-to-do and educated, who have no faith, who make war on it, and scoff at it, and these churlishly refuse to sit at the banquet spread for them by God. There are others who, while they do not scoff at the Faith or make war on it, care nothing for it and live as if it did not exist, being wholly given over to the gratification of their baser passions and to the amassing of wealth, and these also refuse to go to the banquet, to which God in His mercy has invited them. And is not their insult worse and their guilt more reprehensible than that of the Hebrews? The knowledge that we now have of the Faith, or can have with the utmost facility, the luminous proofs all about us, the divine grace given to us in such lavish abundance, all render our refusal and our indifference much more culpable and inexcusable. God calls us to His nuptial banquet with the affection of a father. "Come, come," He says, "to the marriage; all is in readiness." Let us, then, rise up at once and go to the banquet so divinely prepared.

Some of those who had received an invitation paid no attention to it and went, as it is recorded, some to their farms and others to their merchandise. It was a discourtesy and an insult that

should have been punished, but others did still worse, for Jesus goes on to say: *"The rest laid hands on his servants and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death."* It was a barbarous crime, and scarcely credible in men, no matter how savage, to revile and murder those who did them no harm, who discharged a duty imposed upon them by their master, who came to invite them to a splendid and most privileged banquet. Can anything more wicked, brutal, or ferocious be conceived? And such wickedness as this the Hebrews consummated upon the prophets and apostles, sent to invite them to the wedding-feast, and hence Christ, using no figure of speech, said to them at this very time: *"Behold I send to you prophets and wise men, and scribes,"* that is, men who know the law, *"and some of them you will put to death and crucify, some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city."*[1]

This parable and these words are but a forecast of what happened and of what is read in the Acts of the Apostles. And this story goes on, we may say, under our own eyes. Are not those missionaries servants of the great King of heaven, who traverse the seas, who penetrate into barbarous lands, who bear the Gospel message to savages and invite all to the banquet of truth, to the marriage-feast? How are they received? Very often they find the people indifferent; they will not listen to them, they spurn them with contempt; and not unfrequently those faithful servants are ill-treated, beaten, persecuted, driven from country to country, and even cruelly put to death. Not a

[1]Matt. xxiii. 34.

year passes that the Church does not see some of those generous apostles, sent to bear an invitation to the wedding-feast, exiled, thrust into prison and dragged to the scaffold; and at this very time there come from the interior of China harrowing reports of fresh slaughter among our missionaries. It is a repetition of what Christ said of the servants of the king, who were reviled and murdered. Let us go on.

"*When the king heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies he destroyed the murderers and burned their city.*" These words, as St. Jerome and St. John Chrysostom explain, were aimed at the Hebrews and contain the prophecy, so often repeated, of the terrible catastrophe which hung over them. "You, O Hebrews, have spurned the invitation to the banquet, an invitation given to you before it was given to other peoples; you have killed the prophets; you will kill the apostles; you will kill even Him who sent them; your measure is full and, after the mercy of God, will come His justice, a justice that will equal His mercy. God the Father, the King of heaven, will wreak vengeance for so many crimes. He will send His soldiers, the armies, namely, of Vespasian and Titus; these will lay siege to your city, they will apply the torch to it, they will put your children to the sword without mercy, they will make your streets desolate and full justice will be wrought upon you, murderers." Note that Christ calls the Roman armies the *soldiers of His Father;* they were Pagans, it is true, but they were unconsciously the executors of divine justice, and in this sense they were truly soldiers sent of God.

True, God reserves until the next life the full measure of justice to be visited upon the guilty, but sometimes He executes partial justice here on this earth, as a foretaste of what is to come, and this He did in the case of the cruel and stubborn Jews.

However, this language of Our Lord, which, to be in keeping with the parable, the chief actor in which is a king, is wholly military, may be taken in a wider sense to refer generally to the final sentence which God will pronounce upon the wicked, when, according to Scripture language, He will arm against them all creatures and will condemn them to eternal death.[1]

The king, Jesus goes on to say, turning to his servants, added: "*The marriage, indeed, is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy.*" "These children of Abraham, the Jews, because they were proud and obstinate and had upon their hands the blood of so many of the prophets, were unworthy to partake of the banquet, but my banquet shall not on that account be forsaken, others will take their place. *Go ye into the highways and as many as ye shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests.*" Here the meaning of the parable is so thinly veiled that it is easy to read beneath the words. The good

[1]Here again it is well to call to mind the rule of St. John Chrysostom to the effect that every part of a parable can not be applied to the truth it illustrates. The passage, "*Sending his armies he destroyed those men and burned their city*," may be taken in a figurative sense to mean not the armies of the Romans, but the punishment that will be inflicted on the day of judgment.

tidings should be announced to the Jews before they were to others, because they were better prepared than others to receive them. But they spurned the message and the poor Gentiles were called in their stead. This is insisted on over and over again by St. Paul, as may be seen both from his Letters and from his words as given in the Acts of the Apostles. Most of the Jews rejected the preaching of the Apostles and these, in obedience to the command of Christ, turned to the Gentiles, typified by those men who stood in the streets, and who never dreamed of the high honor of sitting down at the table of the king. The Sacred Text says that there were gathered in the banquet-hall *good and bad,* that is, men of every condition, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, noble and ignoble, for the words *good and bad* can not possibly mean the *virtuous and vicious,* because none of them could have been good and virtuous before being called, since all of them were alien from the truth.

My friends, it is ever the same supreme law that regulates the things of God. The angels in heaven above grew proud, rose in rebellion against God, and refused to give Him the homage due to Him. God thrust them from Him, cast them into hell, and to the places once occupied by those high but proud spirits He called men, poor creatures and far inferior to the angels. The Jews were loaded with favors, grew proud and refused to believe in Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as the Saviour of the world. God cast them off and called the Pagans, who were steeped in the darkness of ignorance and utterly despised by the

Jews. It is the application of a most wise law: God casts down the proud and lifts up the humble.

My friends, we Gentiles have come into the inheritance of the Hebrews, an inheritance which they lost by their pride. Let us be on our guard lest the pride that was the undoing of the Hebrews may be our undoing also, lest God may call into our heritage those who will make better use of it, lest wearied of our ingratitude and offended by our pride, indifference, and unbelief, He may remove from among us the lamp of faith and carry it to other peoples, now walking in the shadow of death.

The banquet-hall was filled with guests: "*And the king went in to see the guests and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment, and he said to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding-garment?*" Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and also among the Hebrews, much care was taken to dress becomingly at banquets, and this custom still exists among ourselves, though it is less rigidly insisted on. Which of us would go to a great banquet in an ordinary dress? Among the Orientals the master of the house furnished a banquet-suit to guests who had none.[1]

The banquet, as we have said, signifies the kingdom of God on earth, or the Church. Now what does the wedding-garment signify? Certainly not faith, for if he, who had not a wedding-garment, was at the banquet, that is, in the Church, he surely had faith, since no one can be in the Church without faith. Hence it must be said that the

[1]See note on this text in Curci.

wedding-garment typifies charity or faith accompanied by good works, as the Fathers commonly teach. The king who went in to see the guests is God, who, when time is no more, will render to every man according to his works and let fall the curtain on the stage of this world. To-day's Gospel warns us that in order to be admitted into the banquet of eternal life, we must not only not repel the messengers of God, or mistreat them, nor is it enough simply to listen to them or even to enter into the Church by making a profession of faith, but we are required over and above all this to wear a nuptial garment, to practise virtue, and to keep the law of God.

To some it may seem strange that the king found only one who had not on a wedding-garment, or who had faith and did not the works of faith; since we see very many in the Church living by faith, but not illustrating in their lives the works of faith. The answer is easy and obvious. He who had not on a wedding-garment represents *all* those who believe or have faith and who do not the works of faith.

The king called the unfortunate man, who had come in without a wedding-garment, a friend, a name implying affection. How, you will ask, can one worthy of reprobation be called the friend of God? The king called him *friend* in the same sense in which Jesus called Judas friend, at the very moment when the latter was betraying Him with a kiss: *"Friend, whereunto art thou come? Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?"* He calls him friend to prove His love for him, to remind him of the benefits he has received, and

to bring home to him that by faith he was His son and a child of the Church, as St. Gregory clearly states: "It is remarkable," he says, "that the king calls this man his friend and yet reproves him, as if he should say: You are a friend and not a friend, a friend by faith, but not a friend by works."[1]

We learn from the Gospel that this unfortunate man, when reproved, did not say a word in reply. *He was silent.* What could he say? It was evident both to himself and to every one at the banquet that he had not on a wedding-garment. What excuse could he offer?

My friends, at the great day of judgment each of us shall appear as he really is with his works good or bad; if bad, then destitute of every good work and without a wedding-garment.[2] How can we deny this in the blinding light that will shine out from the countenance of Christ, the Judge? How can we excuse ourselves? What shame will come upon us at seeing ourselves destitute of good works! To escape such shame let us unite to the faith, which fortunately we have, good works, and our garments will be as radiant as the sun.[3]

[1]"Mirandum est, quod hunc et amicum vocat et reprobat, ac si appertius dicat: Amice et non amice; amice per fidem, sed non amice per operationem."—St. Gregory, M. Homil. xxxviii.

[2]In many places in Holy Scripture and particularly in the Apocalypse, works are taken as equivalent to clothing and are called a vesture. And in reality what are the thoughts and all the works of the soul if not acts, or emanations from it, in which it arrays itself as in a beautiful or unsightly garment; just as leaves, flowers, and fruits are both emanations from a tree and its ornament.

[3]"Obmutuit, quia in illa disputatione ultimæ increpationis omne argumentum cessat excusationis, quippe quia ille foris increpat, qui testis conscientiæ intus animam accusat."—St. Gregory, M. Homil. xxxviii.

Then the king said to the waiters: "*Bind him hands and feet and cast him into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" This is the eternal punishment which the Supreme Judge inflicts upon him who believes and lives not according to his belief. Here below he voluntarily bound himself with the chains and fetters of his disorderly passions; it is but just that he should now be involuntarily bound hand and foot and cast into the prison of hell. At the banquet, to which he has been graciously invited, there shone a living and eternal light; outside the banquet there is only darkness, and this is called the outer darkness. At the banquet there is joy and gladness and endless feasting; outside the banquet there is ceaseless wailing and weeping and gnashing of teeth. When a great misfortune comes upon us or a heartrending grief, we weep and are horrified at the evils that beset us, we gnash our teeth; it is one of the consequences of extreme terror, and hence Jesus Christ in this and other places, speaking of the greatest of evils, of the abode of suffering, of hell, mentions, among other evidences of despair, the gnashing of teeth.

In this short sentence Jesus Christ distinctly names four things as among the pains of hell; the loss of the liberty of doing good, the liberty of body and soul—bound hand and foot—darkness, weeping, and the gnashing of teeth; the last two being rather the effect of great and inexpressible suffering.

My friends, we learn from this parable how great and detestable is the sin of not heeding the loving calls of grace, and worse, of treating with

indignity the messengers of God's will, sent by Him; we learn, too, the danger we run, of having given to others the graces to which we have poorly corresponded; we learn that faith is necessary, necessary first to come into the Church and to live in it; but this is not enough; it is also necessary in order to enter into the banquet of everlasting bliss; and we learn further that besides faith good works are required, and that without them our eternal condemnation is inevitable.[1]

[1]I give no explanation of the last verse: "*Many are called, but few are chosen*," because I have already explained it in Homily xxii, vol. i. Should any one wish to make it part of the Gospel he has only to refer to that homily.

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XV

SEE, brethren, how you walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore become not unwise; but understanding what is the will of God. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury; but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts, to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father: being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.—EPISTLE, *Eph.* v. 15-21.

THE Church to-day asks us again to meditate upon some sentences from the Letter of St. Paul to the faithful of Ephesus. I know not how often in the course of the year, but certainly very frequently, passages from this Letter, though one of his shortest, are proposed for our consideration, and rightly. Toward the end of this Letter the Apostle has brought together many admirable moral Gospel maxims of incomparable worth; it is a very mine of practical truths, suited for every condition of life and every class of persons. It is but natural, then, that the Church should frequently lead us to this mine and invite us to take from it the pure gold of holy truth. I shall endeavor to open up this mine, to dig from it the golden truths hidden there, and to detach them

from the earth and dross in which they are imbedded; and do you also endeavor to receive them eagerly and guard them jealously.

In the preceding verses St. Paul, like his Master, merely exhorts the faithful to keep themselves from all cupidity, not to allow themselves to be led astray, as children of light to have no fellowship with the children of darkness, and to bear fruit to Christ by fleeing and reproving evil works, which he calls the works of darkness; and then, pursuing his usual method of pointing out in concise and clear language the evil to be shunned and suggesting the good to be practised, he says: "*See, therefore, brethren how you walk circumspectly.*"

Our life is a journey, beginning with the cradle and ending at the grave, a journey at times smooth and pleasant, though more frequently steep, strewn with briars and thorns, infested with thieves, skirted by declivities and precipices, abounding in pitfalls and beset with innumerable dangers. It is a trying journey, full of snares, and to accomplish it safely one must keep his eyes constantly open, and, if he would not fall, he must be careful where he sets his foot: "*See that you walk circumspectly.*" Our enemies, both within and without, and our own natural infirmity, create so many obstacles and dangers for us that it is difficult not to fall; what will happen, then, if we go along incautiously and thoughtlessly? But if we keep our eyes constantly upon ourselves, if we watch over our thoughts and affections, if we weigh our words and consider our actions, if we are always cautious as to our companions, our friendships, our reading, and in a word as to all

our surroundings, we shall provide against many falls, gain a perfect mastery over ourselves and labor not as unwise, but as wise, according to the admonition of the Apostle: *"See how you walk circumspectly, not as unwise but as wise."*

When we have anything very much at heart we repeat it again and again, and St. Paul here repeats his admonition to walk and to act *circumspectly*, not as *unwise* but as *wise,* where the word wise is put in opposition to unwise and is a repetition of *circumspectly.*

The *circumspection* and wisdom so insistently enforced by St. Paul, should especially manifest themselves in a matter to which he at once refers. He says: *"Redeeming the time."* Heaven is a reward given only to those who toil; he only reaps who has sown. But where do we labor? Where do we sow? Here on earth. When do we labor and when do we sow? In this day of the present life, in time. When night comes on and darkness covers the face of the earth no one can labor; it is the time of rest. Similarly, when death covers us with its black shroud, time ends and endless eternity begins; we can labor no longer; the space of life, in which we could merit, is run out. Now, it may happen, and it often does happen, that many, after having squandered their time, find themselves already near the gates of death and at the close of their lives with empty hands and without merit. Now, if these are wise, what should they do? They should do as does the traveler, who having lost much time in useless talk and unnecessary sleep, quickens his pace and strives to make up for the time so foolishly spent. The Ephesians,

to whom St. Paul was writing, had been mostly Pagans and had come into the Church when they were advanced in years. They had lost much time in idolatry and in the wickedness of Paganism, and not much remained. What was more natural than to exhort them to bestir themselves, and by doing many good works and doing them well, to regain the time lost and thus in a measure reach the perfection of those who had spent their entire lives in well doing?

My friends, now a glance at our own lives. The Faith came to us with our Baptism, even before we had any consciousness of it; but are there not gaps in our lives, and it may be long ones, when we halted on our journey and lost a lot of precious time? Is it not true that we have lived months and months and years in sin? This is all time miserably lost for heaven, and God Himself, omnipotent as He is, could not bring it back. Still we can repair the loss, not by bringing back the time that has been squandered, but by making a better use of what still remains, like the workmen who, during the last two hours of the day, accomplished as much as others in four. This is to redeem the time, as St. Paul admonishes the Ephesians.

And to stimulate them to regain that which they had carelessly lost, the Apostle adds a special motive, saying: *Because the days are evil.* All time is evil, because for men it is short, uncertain, full of trials and dangers, of temptations and sorrow and every sort of evil. True, time holds for them also a measure of good, but the evil far outweighs the good. The time at which St. Paul wrote his Letter was of all times the worst; there were

bloody persecutions and tyrannies, of whose atrocity we can have no adequate notion; to remember that Nero was reigning will give some idea of them; there was appalling corruption, there was slavery, and an utter ignorance of the elementary principles of morality; there were wicked and continuous wars. St. Paul was right in saying, *"the days are evil."* What is to be done? As has been already said: Use well this evil time. But how? Suffer with patience, fortitude, and resignation these many evils and thus make gain for heaven of the calamities of earth. St. Paul says you will thus show your wisdom by seeking to learn the will of the Lord: *"Become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God."*

The evils that torment us, thus it seems the Apostle reasons, are indeed great and the days are evil, but I tell you to gather treasure by suffering generously, and thus redeem the time so unfortunately lost. But you will say that the evils that distress you are due to the malice of man. St. Paul says not; and if you had the wisdom of the children of God you would understand that God so wills things. Why? you will ask. Well, I shall explain.

Whatever happens on this earth is either willed by God or permitted by Him; whatever is good is certainly willed by God, who is goodness itself, and this needs no proof; whatever is not good, but is evil or incites to evil, is not willed by God, but is permitted and tolerated by Him. And since it is clear that God in His omnipotence could, if He would, prevent evil, it follows that if evil happens

it happens because He permits it, and He permits it because it enters into the great designs of His wisdom and mercy. He permits it to make us feel our own weakness, to break our pride, to force us to lift our hands to Him in supplication and to invoke His aid, to detach us from the love of this world, to furnish us an opportunity of exercising patience and charity, prudence and fortitude, to acquire merit and to grow into the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ, the God-man. When then, my brother, the evils of this present world come thick upon you and you feel crushed under their weight, do not complain against God and His providence, saying: "Why, O Lord, dost Thou forsake me?"

In the evils that overwhelm you and in those who are their instruments and ministers, recognize the fatherly hand of God, who does these things or allows them to be done, and know that whatever is done, is all for your good. Look not upon the hand of the wicked one who inflicts the blow; lift your eyes to God, who was able to stay the hand of the smiter and did not. The patient that moans pitifully and quivers under the knife of the surgeon, who takes off the gangrened limb, does not grow angry with the physician, who has been so mercifully cruel; on the contrary, he is grateful to him. This is what the Apostle would teach us when he says: *"The days are evil, wherefore become not unwise, but understanding the will of God."* That is, the days are evil and they are so for our good. This is God's will and should be ours.

St. Paul, continuing his moral exhortation, says: *"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury."*

Drunkenness! This is an ugly word and one disgraceful to a rational man and much more so to a Christian; a word which, like luxury, should not be named among us. And yet it frequently drops from the pen of the great apostle. "*Be not drunk. Drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of Heaven. One is hungry and another is drunk.*" These are words of the Apostle and they prove that, even in the early days of the Church and among the very disciples of the apostles, the degrading vice of drunkenness was not unknown.

And, my friends, what is to be said of our own time? What happens under our very eyes? What a shameful sight we see day by day and particularly on days consecrated to God? Men, old and young, and even women, bawling and reeling along the public streets, present a saddening spectacle of the most disgusting degradation. Drunken parents and famishing and squalid children, weeping from hunger and cold! And are those men? And are they Christians?

Drunkenness robs man of that which distinguishes him from the beast—his reason. Look at the miserable wretch, scarcely able to keep his feet, staggering and finally going down. He utters incoherent words that no one understands, he stares but sees nothing, he laughs stupidly, he entreats, he threatens, he insults, he blasphemes, he seeks trouble, he provokes quarrels, he is an object of horror and compassion, derision and contempt, a dishonor to his family, a torment to those constrained to live with him, a spendthrift and a prodigal, who after a life of scandal goes to an early grave. Such is the drunkard.

In this context the Apostle, who knew human nature well, connects the vice of drunkenness with another, which is its natural consequence, namely, impurity: *"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury."* Impurity and drunkenness always go together; even the Pagans knew this, and Cicero, Seneca, and others bear authoritative witness to it. But we have no need of the authority of even the wisest Pagans; listen to St. Jerome: "Wherever there is intemperance and drunkenness, there will sensuality rule—I shall never believe that a drunkard is chaste. Let others say what they will, I speak according to my conscience. I know that to leave off fasting harms me and that it benefits me to return to it."[1] "Drunkenness belongs to jesters and good-livers, and a stomach seething with wine will soon break forth into sensuality."[2] Banish, my friends, banish intemperance and drunkenness, which make us less than men, which are the scourge of the family and of society: *"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury."*

St. Paul does not stop with what he has said to keep his children from the detestable vice of drunkenness; after he has told them the vices to flee from, he goes on, as is his custom, to suggest the good they should do. *"Be not drunk with wine, but filled with the Holy Spirit."* That is, so live that the grace of God, which is by excellence

[1]"Ubicumque saturitas et ebrietas, ibi libido dominatur. . . . Numquam ego ebrium castum reputavi. . . . Dicat quisque quod vult, ego loquor conscientiam meam. Scio mihi abstinentiam et nocuisse intermissam et profuisse repetitam" (In Epist. ad. Titum).

[2]"Vinolentia scurrarum est et comessatorum, venterque mero æstuans cito despumat in libidines" (Ad Oceanum, Epist. lxxxiii).

the gift of the Holy Spirit, may fill your minds and hearts, and pervade even your bodies. Wine heats the body, exhilarates the spirits, clouds the reason, drives man on to the gratification of the senses, and degrades him to the condition of the brutes. Divine grace fills his soul with a pure and sacred fire, lifts it above itself, illuminates his intellect, gives him a foretaste of heavenly delights, and makes him like an angel. This is the sacred wine with which you may be inebriated: "*Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.*"

And when you are filled with this sacred wine of divine grace your souls will rejoice, your hearts will exult, you will be flooded with a holy joy, and you will feel, whether alone or together, the need of giving vent to this joy "*in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*"

When a man is under the influence of sublime truths or strong human sentiments, much more so if they are divine, he feels an irresistible need of relieving his mind by singing and music, song and music being as natural to man as weeping and laughter.[1] Singing is a natural relief to the internal affections and at the same time it wonderfully feeds and increases them. St. Augustine relates that, on entering a church after his conversion and hearing all the people singing the Psalms

[1]St. Jerome distinguishes hymns and psalms and canticles from one another. In hymns, he says, the greatness, the goodness, and the perfections of God are celebrated, and he classes as hymns those psalms to which *Alleluia* is or may be added; psalms, he says, properly so called, are those which refer to *morals;* in canticles the beauty and harmony of the universe are extolled.

in chorus, he was deeply moved and shed abundant tears. And who of us is not strangely moved and melted at hearing the great voice of the entire people singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the *Miserere,* and the *Pange lingua?* St. Paul exhorts his dear Ephesians to lift up their voices to God in hymns and spiritual canticles, and why should not we do the same?

And here, my friends, is a sad thought that comes into my mind. Frequently we hear the songs of workmen in the mills and shops, of young men on the streets and of farmers in the field. What songs are these we hear? Certainly they are not spiritual canticles or hymns in praise of God or of the Blessed Virgin; they are profane songs, possibly loose and possibly obscene, betraying a vulgar and a corrupt heart, songs which kindle and feed an impure flame. Never defile your lips with such songs, which likely do more than evil conversations to corrupt morals: *"Evil speech corrupts good morals,"* as the proverb runs. How beautiful would it be if the custom, which St. Jerome says existed in the village in which he lived, could be again introduced into our farm life: "In this village of Christ," he says, "all is simplicity, and all silence except the singing of Psalms. Wherever you turn the ploughman, holding the plough handle, sings *Alleluia,*[1] the perspiring reaper diverts himself with Psalms, and the vine dresser while pruning the vine sings a verse from David. These are the ballads of the country, these, as we say, are the love songs,

[1]The word *Alleluia* is composed of *Allelu* and *ia,* an abbreviation for *Jehovah,* and means *Long live Jehovah, Long live God.*

these the whistling of the shepherds and the implements of agriculture.'"[1]

My friends, let not what St. Paul says about the way to sing hymns and psalms and canticles to God escape us. "*Singing,*" he says, "*and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" By these words he reminds us that our prayers, our praises, and our thanksgivings to God should be, not merely utterances of the lips, but should well up from the heart, which many easily forget. Jesus Christ while instructing the poor Samaritan woman said among other things that "*the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth;*" and that "*God is a spirit and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth,*" that is, in a true spirit.[2] As the soul gives life and motion to the body, so the soul must inspire the tongue to sing and praise God. If the mind and the heart do not accompany the tongue, what value can our prayers have or our words of praise? None, because neither mind nor heart is in them and these alone can make them worthy of God and of ourselves; without them they would be but as the prayers and praises of a dreamer or of one in a delirium. We meet a man on the street; he salutes, bows courteously, and goes on his way rejoicing. Now if we could see into his heart and read his thoughts and know that he was unconscious of what he had done and never adverted

[1]"In Christi villula tota rusticitas et extra psalmos silentium est. Quocumque te verteris, arator stivam tenens *alleluja* decantat, sudans messor psalmis se avocat, et curva attondens vitem falce vinitor aliquid davidicum canit. Hæc sunt in provincia carmina: hæ, ut vulgo dicitur, amatoriæ cantiones, hic pastorum sibilus, hæc arma culturæ" (Epist. xvii. ad Marcellam).

[2]John v. 23, 24.

to it, would we feel ourselves honored? I think not. How, then, can we hope that our prayers and praises will be acceptable to God, who sees that they are but the movement of the tongue and a material sound and that the heart has no part in them? Our song is but as the song of the bird, saluting the new-born day. "God," says St. Augustine, "wants not the voice or the music of the harp. He wants the heart." When, then, we praise God and pray to Him, let us at least in beginning lift up our hearts to Him and put meaning and life into our words, as St. Paul in another passage bids us do: *"I will pray with my spirit, I will pray also with my understanding."*[1]

"Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ." Our life and every single instant of it is a continuous beneficence from God; every breathing, every beat of the heart is His gift; the food that nourishes us, the drink that quenches our thirst is His gift; the sun that warms us and gives us light is His gift; the air we breathe is His gift; our whole being, all within us and without, all is His gift. We should be grateful, then, to so lavish a giver and thank Him for all His blessings. But how can we, being but poor miserable creatures, do this? We can do it through Jesus Christ. As God, He is equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost; as man, He is our brother; He is our head and our mediator; our thanks offered through His hands are worthy of God. Let us thank God, then, in His own way: *In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

Our Epistle closes with this beautiful recommendation, which expresses wonderfully well the character of the Gospel law: *"Be subject one to another in the fear of Christ."* Every society, great or small, will live and prosper in the measure in which it is well-ordered, and it is well-ordered as long as every member keeps in his place, and he is kept in his place by obedience. Take away obedience, and every thing is in disorder; families are divided and society hastens to ruin. This obedience St. Paul enjoins, saying: *"Be subject one to another."* Obedience, to be a true and just obedience, must be rendered by subjects to superiors, and this is doubtless the meaning of the words of St. Paul. But why should he say: *"Be subject one to another,"* as if the duty of obedience were laid on each in turn, so that each must obey the other, and no attention be paid to the one in authority. Certainly, the command of the Apostle, *"Be subject,"* implies that subjects must obey their superiors, but I fancy that St. Paul wished delicately to suggest what is a sort of supplement to obedience and what he in another place felicitously expresses in this way: *"In humility let each esteem others better than themselves."*[1] To superiors we owe obedience; to equals and inferiors respect, kindness, courtesy, and condescension, which are somewhat similar to obedience.

And why should we obey others, who after all are but men like ourselves, and possibly even inferior to us? Because God so wills it and because Jesus Christ so commands, since by obeying those who hold His place we obey Him, and by disobey-

[1] Philipp. ii. 3.

ing them we disobey Him. And should we not fear to refuse to obey Jesus Christ? This is why St. Paul after having said, "*Be subject,*" adds: "*In the fear of Christ.*" Thus the authority that commands is lifted up, and with authority obedience is also dignified and ennobled by being referred on to Christ and to God, to whom be honor and glory for all ages.

HOMILY XVI

AT THAT time: There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to Him, and prayed Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not. The ruler saith to Him: Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him: and they brought word, saying that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth: and himself believed and his whole house.—GOSPEL, *John* iv. 46-53.

JESUS returning from His first journey to Jerusalem where He had celebrated the Pasch, and accompanied by some of His disciples, passed

through Samaria on His way to Galilee. On this journey He halted near the city of Sichem, at the Well of Jacob, and converted the celebrated Samaritan woman and sinner and a large number of the Samaritans, as we learn from the Gospel. Then He set out on the road to Galilee and went to Cana, where He had wrought His first miracle by changing water into wine and where it is very likely His mother then was. It seems that during these days the apostles, who had gone up with Him to Jerusalem, returned to their homes and to their avocations at Bethsaida and Capharnaum, since only a few days later, having witnessed the miraculous draught of fishes, they followed Him for good. Jesus therefore was at Cana, but the fame of His miracles and His teaching had spread throughout all Galilee and were still better known at Capharnaum and in its vicinity, whither the apostles had returned after their journey to Jerusalem.

It was necessary to say all this to you by way of introducing the miracle, which you have just heard and which will be the subject of our homily. It took place shortly after the first Pasch, celebrated at Jerusalem, in the first months of the preaching of Jesus, and is narrated only by St. John. And now to begin.

"*There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum.*" Who was this royal official?[1] We do not even know his name, but this is not important. Where did he live? Evidently at

[1]The Sacred Text has *regulus*, or petty king, but it is clear that the text should be *regius*, or royal officer. The word *regulus*, found in the Vulgate is due to a mistake of copyists or interpreters, who wrote *regulus* instead of *regius*. See Calmet.

Capharnaum, a city of some importance in which a Roman garrison was stationed. What position did he hold at Capharnaum? The Gospel does not say. Who was the king whose officer he was? Without doubt Herod Antipas, the son of the Herod who slaughtered the innocents. It was this same Herod Antipas who put John Baptist to death and before whom, three years later in Jerusalem, Jesus was conducted to be judged, as if He were his subject. Herod was the tetrarch or king of Galilee, but a tributary of the Romans.

This officer had a son sick unto death. All hope in physicans was gone. Fancy the grief of the poor father who saw his dear son dying before his eyes. All hope in human remedies having vanished, the loving father betakes himself to superhuman remedies. He had heard reports of Jesus and of His miracles and he had learned that He had lately returned from Jerusalem into Galilee and that He was then at Cana, distant only about ten miles from Capharnaum. What does he do? The thought comes into his mind to go to Jesus and to beg and entreat Him to save his son. What idea did he have of the person of Jesus? How did he regard Him? Did he believe in Him? It would be hard to say; possibly he thought Him a man of God, or even a prophet, and possibly only a great physician. At any rate, to what is the love of a father unequal? He set out from Capharnaum, climbed the intervening hills and having arrived at Cana, where Jesus was, he presented himself before Him and begged Him to go with him to Capharnaum and save his dying son.

Parents, let me ask your patience to express a thought here which will be of use to you? Fathers, and especially mothers, you love your children tenderly, and the younger they are the more you love them. If they fall sick, what will you not do for them? You watch over them day and night; you are alarmed lest they should die; you spare no expense to restore them to health; you pray for them; you call in physicians; you give them their medicine; there is nothing, no matter how toilsome and annoying, that you are not ready to do in the hope of giving them relief. If required, you would do quite as much as this good father of whom the Gospel speaks. This is as it should be and I can not but admire and highly commend your love for your children; it is your simple duty. But now let me ask you: Have not your children, besides a body, also a soul? Yes, faith and reason teach us this. Is not the soul more than the body? Who can doubt it? Now then: Parents, is it not right and just that while you are solicitous for the body, you should be still more so for the soul? Certainly. Well now, my dear parents, what do we see? We see you full of solicitude and loving care, when there is question of the body of your children, of their temporal interests, but frequently neglectful and forgetful of your duties, when there is question of their soul and of their eternal interests. Where are the parents who teach their little children their Christian prayers and the mysteries of faith? Where are the parents who watch as they should over their children; who guard them against perilous companions and friendships; who remind them of their duty to

sanctify the Lord's Day, to listen to the word of God, to frequent the sacraments, and to live as Christians? You will find many parents who give scandal to their children by their conversation, by their backbiting and blasphemy, by putting dangerous books within their reach, and by taking them, or allowing them to go to theatrical performances, which are sometimes irreligious and sometimes suggestive of evil, if not brazenly obscene. Ah, parents, so much love for the bodies of your children, and so little love, or rather, such ferocious hatred, for their innocent souls. So great solicitude for their happiness in time, so little for their happiness in eternity! What a contradiction! Examine yourselves and make fitting resolutions.

The loving father in the Gospel besought Jesus to go down to Capharnaum and heal his son. The faith of this man, as you see, was imperfect. Had he believed Jesus to be the Son of God, he would have said at once, as did the centurion a little later: *"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, only say the word and my son shall be healed."* He must have believed Him to be a prophet, or a saint and nothing more; he believed that unless bodily present He could not restore his son, and that to do so, He must put His hand upon the head of the boy, and pray for him, or else apply some remedy.[1] But this weak and imperfect faith is not surprising in a layman and a royal officer, in those first days of the public life of Christ; it was the faith of many others and

[1]Bonghi (p. 119) leaves it to be inferred that the official took Jesus for a physician, and up to a certain point this may be true.

possibly of some of His own disciples. Let us hear the answer of Jesus.

"*Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not.*"[1] The answer was addressed to the father, but it was also intended for the Jews, of whom there were many present. It expresses sorrow, but it also contains a lesson. "You Jews," He seems to say, "wish above all things to witness miracles, and with miracles you ask for material favors; with you curiosity and interest come first and are more prized than faith; you seek the things of earth rather than the kingdom of God and truth. Lift up your eyes on high; seek first faith, first the goods of eternity and then the things here below."

These words of Jesus Christ may be applied to some Christians who make a show of being religious, more for interest and the material advantage which they actually get out of their profession, or have in prospect, than because they regard religion as a duty and hope for a future reward. They ask of God health of body, exemption from loss and temporal evils, a plentiful harvest, and success in business, oftener and with greater fervor than they ask the salvation of their souls.

That none of us may merit the reproof of Christ, we ought to bear in mind that, in asking for the goods of earth, we should be ready to give them up when He so wills, or when they become harmful to us, or a peril to our souls.

[1] *Signa et prodigia*, signs and miracles. What is the difference between the former and the latter? *Signs* would seem to mean those phenomena that are effected by nature, but slowly; *prodigies or miracles*, those that are wholly beyond the forces of nature, such as to raise the dead. See À Lapide.

This loving father listened humbly to the admonition of the divine Master, and I believe he helped his own cause and stimulated his faith by repeating still more urgently his prayer: "*Lord, come down before my son dies.*"[1] These words of the afflicted father reveal the depth of his love and the anguish that tormented him. He seems to say to Jesus: "Come, come quickly, I beg Thee and I implore Thee to come with me and save my son before that he dies." He seems still to be convinced that the bodily presence of Jesus is necessary to restore his dying son, as if Jesus did not know all things and could not do all things, and even call back the dead to life.

Jesus, seeing the affection of this disconsolate father and his reliant hope, was touched and said to him in a confident tone of voice: "*Go thy way, thy son liveth.*" These words must have been uttered with such authority and assurance as to remove all doubt in the father, and to fill his soul with a faith to which anything is possible, and which in a measure made him worthy of having the miracle wrought in his behalf. "By the same words," says one of the Fathers, "the Saviour cured the soul of the officer, filling it with faith, and healed the body of the son." You see how Jesus works here, not as man, but as God. The boy is far away and at the point of death. He

[1]St. John Chrysostom indeed thinks that the father did not heed the words of Jesus, that being distracted with grief he thought only of the healing of his son. *Regulus filii dolore affectus, non multum hinc Jesu verbis attendit, sed in solius filii cura versabatur.* We see in the words, "*Lord, come down before that my son die,*" a hesitating, an imperfect faith; but the fact that Jesus wrought the miracle at once and that the father repeated his own words show that his faith had been perfected.

does not say: "My good man, have confidence, your boy will recover;" He does not suggest any human remedy and does not even offer a prayer: "*Go,*" He says, "*thy son lives.*" It is an absolute promise, a peremptory command, and we shall see presently that the promise was fulfilled and the command executed in that very instant.

My friends, how did this loving father obtain the bodily cure of his son? By prayer, repeated prayer. Prayer is the great means, accessible to all, by which we may easily obtain divine grace. Make use of it and you will experience its potency.

There may be among those who listen to me fathers and mothers whose sons are ill, not in body, but what is more, in soul, sons who are quarrelsome, insolent, dissolute, unbelievers; who are hastening along the way that leads to perdition and who cause their poor parents to weep bitter tears. Possibly you may have chided them and tried to correct them over and over again, but to no purpose. What remains to be done? Go to the feet of Jesus; pray to Him, as the father prayed, of whom to-day's Gospel tells us; never weary of praying; pray to-day and to-morrow, and for a hundred to-morrows, and in the end your faith will be rewarded. The prayer of a father or of a disconsolate mother for the conversion of her erring son has a wonderful power over the heart of God. How many young men, led away into a life of sin, have been reformed and converted by the prayers of parents, and especially of mothers. The story of St. Augustine and St. Monica is the story of many mothers and of many sons.

But let us return to the Gospel. When the

father had heard the words of Christ his whole being was filled with sunshine and his heart with a sweet and tranquil hope; he gave thanks to Our Lord, he believed, and hastily returned to Capharnaum, impatient to see his son and to verify the effect of that solemn affirmation: *"Go thy way, thy son lives."*

"And as he was going down,[1] *his servants met him, and brought him word, saying that his son lived,"* a form of speech which meant that he was restored to perfect health, as the context implies. That the servants should run out to meet the father and bring him the good news, was perfectly natural. He had set out for Cana to seek Jesus, leaving his son at the point of death; they realized how distressed he was; they saw the young boy suddenly restored from death to life, and full of joy they ran to anticipate his arrival and to bring him word of the happy event. As soon as they saw him in the distance they cried out with a loud voice that his son was living and perfectly well. The loving father, beside himself with joy, remembering the promise of Jesus and ascribing the safety of his son to Him, asked them *"the hour wherein he grew better."* And they replied: *"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."* The father knew that it was at that hour Jesus said to him: *"Thy son lives."*

You see the simplicity and frankness of the narrative; there is none other like it. The Evangelist does not add a single word of his own; he narrates

[1]The Gospel correctly says, *"As He was going down,"* because from Cana, situated on a tableland, the road descends going toward Capharnaum, which is on the shore of Lake Tiberias.

the fact in such a way that you almost see it; there is not a remark, not a suggestion, not a word of surprise or amazement to bring out into stronger light the divine power of Our Lord. What a guarantee is this, what a characteristic of veracity!

The Hebrews divided day and night into twelve hours each; hence when St. John says that the boy was restored to health at the seventh hour and that at precisely the same hour Jesus pronounced the words: *"Thy son lives,"* we are certain that both events took place an hour after midday.

True, the servant said that the cure took place the day before: *"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him,"* but it is not credible that a father, who so longed to look upon his son, would take a day to go a distance of less than ten miles; the difficulty, however, is easily explained if we consider the method of the Hebrews in determining the beginning and the end of the day. We reckon the day from midnight to midnight; while among the Hebrews the new day begins at sunset,[1] and since the meeting of the servants with the father took place after sunset, they could and should say that the fever left him *yesterday* and not *to-day*.

And this seems a proper place to make two remarks suggested to me by the Gospel story. Jesus, a long distance away, by an act of His omnipotent will restored the boy to health. It was a miracle.

[1]Of this Hebrew usage of beginning the day at sunset of one day and ending it about sunset of the next, we have a memorial and proof in the service of the Church. The Church begins the office of the coming day with vespers, that is, at sunset of the day preceding; and in Genesis, to signify a day the phrase is used, *evening and morning of one day.*

The father who requested the miracle and in whose behalf it was wrought wished to be sure of it and hence asked his servants at what hour it took place. Was not this to imply a doubt in the promise of Jesus? No, to make sure that it was a miracle was the right and the duty of the father, and in so far his conduct was praiseworthy. The Church does the same and so should we whenever the need arises. There is question, say, of some extraordinary fact, of a prophecy, of a miracle, of an apparition, or of some other supernatural phenomenon. What may we do, and what should we do? We should investigate rigorously and by the light of reason the facts which are related or said to have been seen, and whosoever accepts them without examination shows that he is hasty and readily deceived. God has given us our reason and it should be to us a rule and a guide. When, then, we investigate with reason facts which are said to be miraculous, we do no wrong to God; rather we honor Him by using the reason, which is His gift, to ascertain whether such facts are truly supernatural, or simply natural, or the result of ignorance, or the deceits of fraud. Faith has its rights, certainly, and they are inviolable; but reason has also its rights, and they, too, are not less inviolable, because it is a gift of God, and St. Thomas well says that "Man would not believe if he did not know that it is his duty to believe."[1]

And the second observation is this: The father, because he knew that the utterance of the words of

[1]Had facts been more rigorously examined and certain pretended apparitions, the shame of much mystification would have been avoided. Leo Taxil! Miss Vaughan!

Christ and the healing of his son were simultaneous, put aside all doubt; he realized that Our Lord was the Master of nature and that all faith was due to Him, and in fact, *"he believed and his whole family."* The Gospel twice says that he believed, first, when Jesus said to him: *"Go, thy son lives,"* and he went his way, and next, when he saw that the words of Christ had been fulfilled: *He believed.* What difference is there between the first *"he believed"* and the second? A vast difference, namely, first, *he believed* that his son would be healed; and next, *he believed* that Christ was the Messias; the first belief led him on to the second. An imperfect and nebulous faith inspired him to go from Capharnaum to Cana, and to kneel at the feet of Jesus, and it put upon his lips the prayer for his son; the words of Jesus strengthened this faith, and full of hope he set out on his way home; the knowledge of the miracle completed the work of grace and opened his mind to the knowledge of who Jesus really was and he believed in Him.

I am thinking now how many fathers there were at that time and on that very day, who had sons dangerously sick. How many in Capharnaum and in the neighboring towns had seen or heard tell of the healing of this young man by Jesus Christ? And how many imitated the royal officer by going to Jesus and asking Him to restore their son to health? I do not know, nor does the Gospel tell us, but it may most probably be said that that loving father had few imitators and possibly none. And why? A mystery of human liberty and, I may add, of human blindness. So it is, my friends.

Jesus Christ through His Church is continuously teaching, remitting sin, saving souls; this is the work for which He came on earth and for which He abides perennially in His Church. He receives all who go to Him, He pardons the sins of those who ask pardon, He saves those who will to be saved. But how many go to Him? A certain number. And the others? They care not for Him. And why? I repeat it again: A mystery of human liberty and of human blindness.

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XVII

BRETHREN: Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of His power. Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil; for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one: And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit (which is the word of God). —EPISTLE, *Eph.* vi. 10-17.

I HAVE said elsewhere and I repeat again that the latter half of the Letter to the faithful of Ephesus, and specifically the last three chapters, is in substance a splendid collection of moral truths, which bind all classes of persons. It would seem that the Apostle wished briefly to condense the whole of Christian morality into those few sentences, without in the least troubling himself about their orderly arrangement, or supporting them

with proofs. He states them with a clearness equaled only by their brevity; he crowds one upon the other and in the vehemence of writing he frequently repeats, and he enforces his teaching with all the ardor of his great soul. We admire, and justly, the beautiful moral sentences scattered up and down through the works of Cicero and Epictetus, of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, and when we reflect that they were Pagans we can not withhold our admiration for these writers; but I do not hesitate to say that if all the moral sentences of these philosophers were collected together, they would not equal the tenth part of those which the Apostle has, with a lucidity and conciseness wholly his own, given us in those three chapters.

Having set before his dear children the vices they should shun, the virtues they should practise, and the treasure they should guard, he points out the enemies they must fight, and in language wholly military in character he teaches them the way to combat and conquer. And here begins our commentary.

St. Paul starts out by exhorting children to obey their parents and parents to bring up their children in discipline, to educate and to correct them and to be on their guard against provoking them to anger; he then goes on to exhort servants cheerfully to obey their masters and masters to treat their servants humanely, reminding them that they, too, are servants and that God is their Master; then he continues: "*Be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of His power.*"

When a general is about to lead his troops against a dangerous enemy, he tells them: "Sol-

diers, be brave and fight like valiant men; your king is looking upon you, and he has other battalions ready to send to your relief. Forward!" Similarly the Apostle, encouraging the Christians in their warfare against the common enemy, cries out: "Be brave, and fight as fearless soldiers." And where shall we get the strength to battle and overcome? Surely not in ourselves, who are so feeble, and so utterly helpless as compared with our enemies, but from the omnipotent God under whose eyes we are doing battle. He will give us strength, He will be with us, and with His name upon our lips and His courage in our hearts we shall be victors. In this fierce and cruel war they conquer who mistrust themselves, who stay where obedience places them, and who put all their trust in God.

St. Paul goes on to say: "*Put you on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.*" Tertullian says that "every Christian is a soldier fighting under the banner of Christ"; now every soldier should have his armor and the soldier of Christ and of God should have the armor, not of man, but of God and should wear it: "Put on the armor of God." What the armor of God is we shall see presently in detail.

Now, I wish to say a word on this expression of St. Paul: "*That you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.*" He does not say that we should attack the enemy, though sometimes we may be obliged to do so, but he says that we must *withstand* the enemy or *resist* him, as he adds further along. You know there are two kinds of war, an *offensive* war, when the enemy

is attacked, and a *defensive,* when one holds his ground and resolutely awaits the coming of the enemy, prepared to repel his assault. As a rule, we Christians should confine ourselves to a *defensive* warfare against the enemy; and to overcome him it is only necessary to keep ourselves in a state of grace, to remain loyal to God; stubbornly refusing to yield an inch, to discover his secret artifices, to repel his open assaults, to resist and overcome temptation, and the victory is ours.

And who is this enemy of ours? St. Paul tells us and calls him the devil. *"Against the deceits of the devil."* Scarcely has he named him when he proceeds at once to tell us more about him. *"Our wrestling,"* he says, *"is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places."* "Be not deceived," he says, "our warfare is not against flesh and blood, that is to say, against men like ourselves, which would be hard enough and not without danger, but against demons, who were once angels, and chiefly against principalities and powers[1] and those who share largely in the government of this lower world of darkness; in a word against wicked spirits, who strive to deprive us of the hope of heaven and its blessings. How many things we learn from this sentence of St. Paul.

We learn that demons exist, that they are cease-

[1]From this passage of St. Paul it appears that even among the superior hierarchies, among the principalities and powers, there were apostate spirits.

lessly laying snares for us and trying to deceive us, that in strength, craftiness, and power we are no match for them, that they exercise a malignant influence in the world, their one occupation being to prevent us from gaining the blessings of heaven.

Demons therefore exist; it is an article of faith; every page of Sacred Writ bears witness to it, and the traditions of all the peoples of the earth confirm it. Demons are spirits; they can be neither seen nor felt; they are immortal and we can form no exact idea of what they are like, any more than we can of the good angels. When you see them represented as ugly, horrid monsters you should not believe that they are like that, nor should you believe that the good angels are like handsome young men with wings, as they are sometimes painted. Being unable to form an idea of a pure spirit, whether good or bad, we strive as best we can to depict the good beautiful, and the bad repulsive.

These demons were created by God and created good, adorned with grace and dowered with choicest gifts; they became wicked because they grew proud, they rose in rebellion against their Creator and refused to give Him the obedience due Him, and He cast them out from heaven.

Why do they bear such unrelenting hatred against us men, who have done them no harm? Because they are wicked and the wicked love only evil; because in hating God they hate also men, in whom God's image is resplendent; because they refused to obey God, whom they foresaw made man before time was, and because they attribute

their ruin to the singular love which He bore us men; because in making war on us they make war on Jesus Christ, the God-Man, and on those who have been called to fill their places.

And why does God permit demons all over the earth to lay snares for men and wage war against them?

Because every one must be tried, and because without a battle there is no victory, and without a struggle no crown. The angels in heaven had their trial, Jesus Christ voluntarily underwent His, all those, who have gone before us had theirs, and why should not we also have ours? The story of earth and heaven, of angels and men, is a story of ceaseless conflict, of defeats and victories; God so wills it, it is for our own good; let us, then, take our place and fight valiantly.

And here some one may suggest a difficulty, which it is as well to examine and solve. St. Paul teaches us that our struggle is against wicked spirits and not against men, but he also teaches, and so does all Christian tradition, that we must war against our flesh, against our passions, and against the world; that these are not less our enemies than are the demons. How, then, are these conflicting doctrines to be explained? There are not and can not be contradictory doctrines in Christian teaching. Certainly the flesh and its passions, the world and its scandals, the wicked and their artifices, are our enemies and we must make perpetual war upon them, but who has raised up these enemies against us? Who has caused our flesh and our passions to rise in rebellion? Who has filled the world with the wicked

and urged them on to do us harm? The author of all our evils, he who brought sin and death into the world, the passions and scandal, is the devil; and the world and the flesh are his allies, which he has won over to his side and on which we must make war. Therefore the Apostle could well say that our wrestling is against the spirits of wickedness, because they are our original and greatest enemies.

And now, my friends, allow me to digress somewhat and speak to you of those struggles and battles with flesh and blood and with their supreme master, the devil. In ordinary language these conflicts are called temptations. Now I ask you: Can we escape temptations?

To escape all of them would be impossible; we should have to quit this earth, lay aside this body, in a word, cease to be men, unless God should work a miracle in our behalf to free us from them. Nevertheless, we must admit that we can escape a great many of these temptations by avoiding the occasions of them, by watching closely over our senses, and by using all the means which Christian prudence suggests.

And are we obliged to avoid those temptations, which it is in our power to avoid?

Without doubt. The love we should have for ourselves and the fear of offending God ought to constrain us to shun those temptations which we foresee, and this duty will be in proportion to the danger which the temptations would be to us of committing sin and to the sacrifice which must be made to escape them.

And how are we to act when the temptations are

inevitable, or when an impossible sacrifice, or an extremely burdensome one, must be made to avoid them?

When a temptation must be met there is not a shadow of sin in facing it, because it is impossible that we should be constrained to commit sin. Then, my friends, have no fear; trusting in God face the temptation and you can not but come off victorious.

The first step in temptation is the bad thought and the pleasure of which, by aid of the imagination, it gives us a foretaste, if we consent. The thought that comes unbidden to the mind, and the pleasure which it causes, if not consented to, is no sort of sin, not even a slight one. But if we deliberately caress the bad thought, if we voluntarily take delight in forbidden pleasure, then the enemy enters into our soul, the will and the temptation are wedded, and the sin is consummated.

Sin, my friends, and do not forget the observation, sin enters into the heart and becomes master of it when your will opens the door, and when it says to the temptation demanding admission: "Yes, come in, I bid you welcome." As long as the will does not give assent by saying, *Yes,* the temptation remains outside. It may make a noise and threaten, it may please, it may renew its suggestions and assaults a hundred times over, but it can do no harm; nay, if resisted, it will increase your merit.

Now listen to the Apostle, who teaches us how we may surely come victorious out of any trial, no matter how fierce and stubborn. "*Stand having your loins girt about with truth, and having*

on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish the fiery darts of the most wicked one, and take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.'' St. Paul in this passage, wishing to describe the armor of the Christian soldier fighting against wicked spirits, very properly draws his imagery from a soldier of this world. At the time of the Apostle a soldier was expected to provide himself with arms by which to defend himself against the attacks of an enemy; with a belt or cincture with which to gird his loins, with a breastplate to protect his breast, with boots and greaves as a defense for the legs and feet, with a shield with which to parry the thrusts directed against any part of the body, and finally, with a helmet to cover the head; and this complete armor of the ancient soldier, St. Paul, by a beautiful and ingenious metaphor, applies to the Christian soldier.

''Stand having your loins girt about with truth.'' The belt, or military cincture, was an ornament, and at the same time it gave to the soldier greater freedom and agility in marching, and even those who in these days are preparing to climb mountains tightly gird their loins. The Christian soldier has a long way to travel and he must frequently scale steep mountains and the precipices of virtue. Let him gird his loins then, not with the material, but with the spiritual cincture of truth: *''Having his loins girt about with truth.''* Let truth always be with us, let it be a

girdle to our loins and we shall never feel the fatigue of the journey.[1]

Possibly truth in this passage, as some interpreters say, may mean sincerity of mind, fidelity to the promises made to God, the complete mastery we ought to exercise over ourselves by subduing our passions. Still it is clear that all these interpretations may be reduced to one, namely, that it is our duty in all things and always to take truth and truth alone for our mentor and guide.

"Having on the breastplate of justice." Justice in its widest sense, as used in Scripture, signifies virtue and holiness, the summary of all those good works which make man pleasing to God. Justice demands that to every one shall be given what belongs to him, and in this sense *Justice* means virtue and holiness of the most exalted kind, and hence Holy Writ describes a *saint* as a *just* man. To have on the breastplate of justice, then, means to be adorned with every virtue, and if you are adorned with every virtue, what can the enemy do against you? Nothing.

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Feet are for walking, and St. Paul wishes to say: Having your feet shod and protected so that you may walk briskly along the way of the Gospel, that is, that you may observe the Gospel precepts and keep its holy truths, which in the midst of strife will lead you on to

[1]"Qui cinctus est hac veritate, numquam fatigabitur, vel si fatigatur, in veritatem hanc reclinabitur et conquiescet. Quid enim, dic, quæso, ipsum fatigabit? Paupertas? Nequaquam: requiescet enim in veris divitiis. . . . Servitus ipsum fatigabit? Nequaquam: novit enim quæ vera servitus sit, idemque judicium de ægritudine, fame, aliisque, quæ alios affligere solent etc."—St. Joan, Chrysost. in hunc locum.

peace, to the true peace that surpasses the comprehension of man.[1]

But that which above all things we should try to do, says St. Paul, is "*to take the shield of faith.*" Faith, that is all revealed truth as a whole; and faith, that is our firm adhesion to revealed truth, should be our shield of defense in our wrestling with the enemy. When we keep the truths of faith steadfastly before our minds, as for example, the presence of God, divine judgment, hell, and the like, how is it possible that we should yield to temptation? Say, for example, that the enemy tempts you to steal, or to blaspheme, or to impurity, or to some other sin, and you see God, your Judge, in His majesty, heaven and all its joys on the one side, and on the other hell and its devouring flames, and He says to you: "If you commit that sin you shall be at once and forever shut out from heaven and cast into the midst of those never-ending flames," think you that you could commit that sin? No matter how violent the temptation may be or how dreadful, you should find strength to cast it out and drive it from you in that vision of heaven and hell and of the great Supreme Judge. Not one in a thousand would be insane enough to choose the sin and with it the penalty of being cast at once into hell. Now what does faith do? It makes living and vivid before our eyes the eternal truths, so that we almost touch and feel them, and how with these before him can any one yield to temptation? Faith, then,

[1]The phrase: "*Your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace,*" is a Hebrew form of speech, harsh to us, which may be changed, if I mistake not, into the following: Go forward cheerfully, observe and spread the Gospel that brings us peace.

is an impenetrable shield which covers us and protects us against the assaults of the enemy.

St. Paul in his Letter to the Hebrews celebrates the praises of faith and says that all who were saved were saved by faith; by faith, the Apostle goes on to say, the saints subdued kingdoms, wrought justice, closed the mouths of lions, extinguished flames, became strong in conflict, were superior over torments, derision, and death. Against faith the fiery darts of the wicked one are shivered and extinguished. The ancients were accustomed, not only to sharpen the points of arrows, but also to cover them with pitch, resin, and other inflammable material, and having set them on fire, they shot them at their enemies, so that they might both transfix them with iron and burn them with fire. Temptations, St. Paul says, even though they should be as sharp as darts and as fiery, are not to be feared; they will be broken and extinguished on the shield of faith.[1] At the first intimation of a temptation, at the first approach of the enemy, lift up your shield, reanimate your faith, think of God, who sees you, who bears in His hand a crown, and the victory will be yours. *"Take unto you the helmet of salvation."* The soldier must cover and protect every part of the body, but above all the head, because that is the chief seat of life and the rest of the body is dependent on the head. What are words and works? They are the daughters and the outward manifestations of our

[1]Merito autem fidem nominavit *scutum*. Quomodo enim scutum ante totum corpus ponitur veluti propugnaculum, ut quod sit murus, ita etiam fides. Omnia enim ei cedunt. . . . Tela autem ejus dicit et tentationes, et nefarias cupiditates; et dicit *ignea*, tales enim sunt cupiditates."—St. Joan. Chrysost.

thoughts, since we first think and then speak and act. Would you have your words and works good and holy? Then look to your thoughts, guard your mind with the helmet of salvation, and allow no thoughts to enter into it that are not worthy of a Christian and meritorious of salvation.

After speaking of defensive armor St. Paul goes on to speak of the arms of attack, of which he names only one and that the noblest and most common of all: *"Take unto you the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God."* In his Letter to the Hebrews St. Paul compares the word of God to a two-edged sword, reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit. The sword skilfully managed is an arm of defense, but it is above all a weapon of attack to wound and slay an enemy. Similarly, the word of God, which kindles, revives, stimulates, and invigorates faith, is for us an arm both of attack and defense, with which we can either defend ourselves or prostrate our enemy.

A faith that is not fed by the word of God is as a seed or tree upon which the rain never falls; it wastes away and dries up; it is like an eye that the sun's rays never reach, or a body that is famishing for want of food. Faith, says St. Paul comes by hearing, that is by word of mouth, and without this word or instruction, faith is dormant, if not dead. Just a while ago we heard St. Paul command the faithful to take up the shield of faith in order to extinguish the fiery darts of the wicked one, which means that faith is nourished and revived by the word of God. This word of God and food of faith is found in Holy Writ, and in all good books suited to the condition of the reader.

But the church in particular is the place to listen to the word of God, where the minister of God explains it, and where you should all be very solicitous to hear it. And why? Because it is there announced to you authoritatively by the Church and without error; because when announced in the church there comes with it a special grace; and because the presence of the people gathered there is a source of edification to all. So, my friends, never neglect an opportunity to listen to the word of God in the church when you can, and see that your children do the same. Do not say: "I am sufficiently instructed and there is no need of my going to the church to listen to the priest." I do not say that you are not instructed, yet it will do you no harm to hear again what you know. Do not say: "I study my religion at home myself." You will pardon me if I say that I doubt it. You may have a good will, but I fear that you will not take up your catechism to study it and, even if you should, are you quite sure that you will understand its meaning?

St. Paul calls faith the sword of the spirit, but a sword little by little gets rusty, and it is the work of the sacred ministry to keep it clean and bright and sharp; therefore, every Sunday take it to church and you will be sure to have a sword such as a Christian soldier should wear.

Christ for our comfort and our instruction allowed Himself to be tempted; how did He drive back the tempter in confusion and shame? By casting into his face the word of truth, the word of God. Be ye all, my friends, soldiers of Jesus Christ, take up the arms which the Apostle has set

before you, cover yourselves with them from head to foot, seize the sword of the word of God, wield it courageously, and the victory will be assured, and after the victory the crown.

HOMILY XVIII

AT THAT time Jesus said to Peter: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had and payment to be made. But that servant falling down besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence: and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved: and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being an-

gry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.—Gospel, *Matt.* xviii. 23-35.

This is the Gospel lesson which the Church gives us for our meditation to-day. This parable was narrated by Jesus Christ in Galilee during His last stay there, a short time previous to His last journey to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles, which fell about the twentieth of September and lasted for eight days. Hence it may be inferred that this parable was possibly the last of His preaching in Galilee, seven months before His death.

An able writer,[1] the author of a Life of Christ, says that the whole nature and character of the kingdom of heaven, as preached by Jesus Christ, is contained in this singularly beautiful parable. It is, then, well worth your while to give it some thought.

Before explaining the parable it is necessary to know the facts which gave occasion to Our Lord to narrate it. From St. Luke[2] we learn that Jesus Christ said to His apostles: *"If thy brother sin against thee, reprove him; and if he do penance, forgive him."* Then St. Matthew takes up the narrative, saying that Peter, turning to Jesus, asked: *"Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?"* And Jesus replied: *"I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times"*—an expres-

[1] P. Didon. vol. i, p. 491.
[2] xvii. 3.

sion which in Hebrew means without limitation. Having given this answer, Jesus spoke the parable which we are about to explain. From what has thus far been said you will understand that the purpose and scope of the parable is to clinch the argument in favor of the necessity of forgiveness.

"*The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants.*" In another place I spoke of the various meanings given to the words, "*The kingdom of heaven,*" in the books of the New Testament; here they mean whatever is necessary to enter into and abide in the Church and to belong to the kingdom of Jesus Christ in time and eternity.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the king is God, Jesus Christ Himself, that the servants are the believers; that the debts of the servant represent his offenses or sins, the rendering of the account the divine judgment; and the punishment inflicted on the servant, the penalty due in rigorous justice to sin. The king, the Gospel says, would take an account of his servants, to see how much they owed him or he owed them.

My friends, we live in the house of this good king, namely in the Church; we are His servants; we are generously provided for, so that nothing is wanting to us. We should therefore give this heavenly Master our service and obey His every behest; being His creatures and He being our absolute Master, we should be obliged to serve Him in everything without remuneration; but He is so good and bounteous that He wills to pay and pay generously for every service, but He wills also

that we should be responsible for every fault and bear its just penalty. There are two books, the book of our conscience and the book of the infinite wisdom of God, in which everything is written down, what He gives us, and what we do and think and say.

Nothing escapes, nothing is forgotten, nothing erased; these two books are indestructible and contain the whole history of our lives, and according to the issue of them shall be the reward or punishment which we shall receive. This is a consoling truth and a terrible one; consoling, because we shall receive a reward for every good deed, even the least; terrible, because for every misdeed and for every improper word we shall receive an adequate punishment. These books we ourselves write with our own hand; every instant, be it well spent or illy, we write them, if the expression may be used, with the diamond point of our own free will. Before the rendering of the account we can cancel the entries of our debts by repentance, and we can also cancel our credits, or our good works, by sinning. In a word we have it in our power to write whatever we like in those books, to change what is there, to increase our credits or our debts; the final result will be seen on that day when the Master will say to us: "Give an account of your works." Let this thought be ever before our minds, so that it may always stimulate us to cancel our debts and increase our credits, by avoiding sin and doing good deeds.

Let us return to the parable. *"And when He had begun to take an account one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents."* This

was an enormous debt,[1] but it truly represents our debts to God. My friends, let us try in a rapid glance to take in all the sins we have committed from the day that we came to the use of reason until this present hour, during twenty, forty, sixty years—all sins of thought and desire, of word and deed, of omission and commission; sins committed in our youth, in mature manhood, in old age; at home, alone, and in company; in school, in society, and in the various offices held by us; sins against God, against our neighbor, in the discharge of our duties, and so on to the end. My God, what a countless number! The mind staggers under the thought.

And to think that these sins, inasmuch as they have been committed by us miserable creatures against God, the supreme Majesty and our supreme Benefactor, and committed under His very eyes, and committed for a vile pleasure, and committed by an abuse of His gifts, take on a sort of infinite malice! Taking all this into account, is it not true, my friends, that our sins, because of their number and gravity, constitute an enormous debt before God and are truly represented by the thousand talents which the servant owed his Master?

The debt being discovered, the unfortunate servant could not deny it; it was his own doing, and it must be paid. But how could a poor servant pay so colossal a debt? It was impossible.

[1]When simply a talent is mentioned in Sacred Scripture, a gold, not a silver talent, is meant. The talent was a sum not calculated by count, as with us, but by weight, as is still done in some countries of the East. The talent weighed about forty kilograms, and was equivalent to six thousand Italian lire, and hence six thousand talents were equal to sixty million lire. (In our money approximately $11,400,000.)

So, my friends, it is equally impossible for us to pay with our sole resources the debts we owe Almighty God. The only hope we have of canceling them is in the infinite mercy of God, who graciously wishes to condone them to us.

The parable goes on: "*And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all he had, and payment be made.*" We are horrified at learning that to pay a debt, not only the servant, who owed the debt, but also his wife and children could be sold; to us it seems, as it really is, a frightful cruelty. But it should be observed that Jesus Christ simply cites the parable without either approving or disapproving such an enormity, as He did not approve, and could not, the theft of the unjust steward. It should be borne in mind that ancient laws gave to creditors the right, not only to cast debtors unable to pay into prison, but also to sell them and their wives and children;[1] and this law, it would seem, was in force, at least in some cases, among the Hebrews.[2]

Here it is well to call to mind the wise rule given by St. John Chrysostom for the explanation of parables, namely, that the parable is not to be applied in such a way that every detail of it shall be rigorously true. If in the present instance we would urge the meaning of the parable in every particular, we should be forced to say that the

[1]We know that there existed a very ancient law in Rome, giving to creditors the right to kill an insolvent debtor and to divide his body among them in proportion to the amount due each. We know also that this horrible right was never made use of, but the law existed. To us, whose ideas and customs are so different, such things seem impossible.

[2]See Fourth Book of Kings, chap. iv. l. et seq.

wife and the children are equally responsible for the debt of the husband and father, and that they could be punished for the sin committed by him, which would be a monstrous injustice. We know that sins are personal, and that each of us must be responsible for his own and not for those committed by others, no matter how near they may be to us or how closely related. Jesus Christ, as I have said, narrates the parable as it happened, or might happen, without at all approving its morality.

What did the miserable servant do on hearing the command? It is easy to guess. He had only one thing to do and this he did. *"Falling down he besought the lord, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all."* It was the heart-cry of one who feels his utter helplessness, of one who is shipwrecked and is battling with the waves of the sea and has no hope unless some one comes to his aid. *"Have patience with me."* He does not deny the debt, or say it is too large, or offer excuses; he only begs for mercy. In all this we should imitate this servant; we ought to acknowledge and confess the multitude of our sins, offer no sort of excuse, put all our hope in the mercy of God, and cry out to Him: "Have patience with me, be merciful to me, O Lord."

Was this servant, reduced to such cruel straits and with the threat of his master hanging over him, sincere in what he promised? Was his tongue a true witness of his heart? It is clear from what took place immediately afterward that fear alone drew from his lips that agonizing cry, and that there was not the shadow of a repentant

thought in his heart. As for his promise to pay all, that was simply an untruth. How could he, a poor servant, burdened with a family, have the least hope of ever being able to pay in full so enormous a debt? Was it not much better for him to say candidly that he could not pay and humbly to appeal to the goodness and charity of his master, than to promise what he never would be able to do? He talked of justice when his only possible way of escape was in mercy. This was only pride thinly veiled.

The lord seeing him at his feet, hearing his cry, and witnessing his agony, was moved with pity. He had compassion on him, and without adverting at all to the promise of the miserable man to pay all, or saying that he would reduce the debt so that the servant could pay it, which would be a great munificence, but following the impulse of his heart, he forgave him the whole debt unconditionally. What generosity, what charity, in this lord or master! It is a living exemplification of God's truly infinite charity toward us sinners. We cast ourselves at His feet in the person of His ministers, we acknowledge the magnitude of our debt, the multitude of our sins, and the impossibility of satisfying His justice, and we cry out: "Lord, we have sinned; our iniquities are beyond all counting; we are penitent; pardon us;" and the good God pardons us all and sends us away comforted.

I have said that this servant did not repent in his heart, and this is clear from what the Gospel says immediately after. How, then, could this lord, who read the servant's heart and well knew

what he would do as soon as he went out from his presence, forgive him the debt? There is not a word written in the Gospel that is not an aid to our instruction. God undoubtedly reads our hearts and knows whether or not we are repentant when we kneel at the feet of His minister; if repentant, He adds His own words to the words of His minister, who says, "I absolve thee," and the soul is cleansed of all sin. But if we say with the tongue: "I am repentant," and the heart does not confirm what the tongue expresses, God, who reads the heart, will not add His words to those of the minister, when he says: "I absolve thee," and we shall go away with all our sins upon us, or rather with possibly the added sin of sacrilege. In this passage of the Gospel the king or lord, who represents God, wishes to act the part of the minister and to feign to be satisfied with an external confession, though all the time he is reading the heart, and this is a great comfort to those who hold His place and exercise this ministry of mercy.

The servant, having received the full condonation of his debt, went out and departed for his home. We should fancy that that man was filled with joy and gratitude toward his generous lord, and, as might be expected, with thoughts inclined toward charitable and magnanimous deeds. But such was not the case. He had hardly gone out from the presence of the lord and was only a few feet distant from him when "*he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred pence* (about fifteen dollars of our money), *and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what*

thou owest.'' Who does not feel his blood boil and his soul rise in indignation against this wicked servant, who, a few moments after having received a full condonation of his enormous debt, seizes a companion by the throat and demands payment of the few dollars due him? Having himself experienced the charity of his master he should have exercised it toward his fellow-servant. The poor man taken by surprise thought he could do no better than to imitate the creditor himself and ''falling down besought him, saying: *Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.''* Hearing from his fellow-servant the very words which he had addressed to his lord and with such felicitous success; seeing at his feet his companion in the same attitude in which he had been to his master; and getting from him a promise to pay all, which he might believe sincere, since it was possible and easy to discharge, the sum being small, it would seem that this ruthless servant would have felt himself overcome with pity, and either have been satisfied with the promise, or, what was still more natural, have remitted the entire debt. But he did nothing of the sort. The humble petition of the fellow-servant appeared still more to inflame his anger; he would not listen to the idea of a delay; and *''went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt.''* The contrast between the conduct of the lord with his debtor servant and that of the debtor servant with his companion, is so monstrous that it is wholly useless to say any more about it; it is something more easily felt than expressed.

And here an application at once practical and

important suggests itself. God has remitted to each of us over and over again the great debt of our sins. And have we pardoned our brothers, who perchance have sometimes offended us? Their offenses against us are as nothing compared with our offenses against God, either in number or malice. Well, God has pardoned us and possibly we have refused to pardon our brother! The Creator pardons the creature, the creature will not pardon the creature! The infinite Majesty pardons this miserable servant, and this miserable servant refuses to pardon his brother and fellow-servant! And if we do sometimes pardon in word, the pardon is not of the heart, and we cherish deep down in our soul feelings of enmity, spite, and a secret desire of revenge, which manifest themselves in bitterness of speech, haughtiness of conduct, and contemptuous actions.

Let us go back to our parable: "*His fellow-servants seeing what was done were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done.*" This circumstance adds beauty to the parable and naturalness to the narrative, since the lord, that is God, had no need of being told what had happened. "*Then the lord called the servant and said to him: Thou miserable servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?*" Certainly, a more just or better merited reproof can not be conceived. "*And the lord being angry delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt.*" Without doubt the torture here signifies the eternal punishment due to that

pitiless servant, so unfeeling toward his fellow-servant and so ungrateful toward his lord.

This sentence of the lord embodies a difficulty and it is well to solve it. We know that when God pardons our sins, they are pardoned for good and all, and that, even should we unfortunately again fall into the same sins or others, our former sins do not revive, nor are they again brought against us. How, then, does it come about that the lord condemns the servant for those debts, or sins, which he had so fully and freely condoned? What is the explanation of this? Possibly, the parable may be understood in the sense, that, since the pitiless servant had not repented of his fault, his pardon was not real, but apparent; his savage harshness toward his fellow-servant was a public proof that he had not repented, and hence the punishment, with which he was first threatened, was inflicted on him. But possibly, too, it may be understood in this sense, which seems a better explanation: The debt was remitted and all his sins were cancelled, but his ferocious cruelty toward his fellow-servant was a crime so heinous that it was equivalent in malice to the debt for which he was first condemned, and therefore brought upon the miserable man the same punishment.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this parable? It is all embodied in the last sentence, which is as appropriate as it is luminous. *"So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your heart."* Would you have God forgive you your sins? Forgive your brothers their offenses against you. You will not pardon them? Neither will God pardon

you. The sentence of the Gospel is applicable here when it is said: *"Forgive and you shall be forgiven;"* and that other taught us by Jesus Christ Himself in the Lord's Prayer: *"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."* Never, my dear friends, forget those words full of deepest meaning, which are contained in the sentence of our divine Master upon the merciless servant: *"If you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."* Do you catch the meaning? The pardon must be a pardon not of the lips or an external act; it must well up from the heart. As the heart is the home of virtue, so also is it the home of sin.

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XIX

BRETHREN: Being confident of this very thing, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus; as it is meet for me to think this for you all; for that I have you in my heart; and that in my bonds, and in the defense, and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: That you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offense unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—EPISTLE, *Phil.* i. 6-11.

THIS reading for the present Sunday has been selected by the Church from the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. The Apostle wrote this Letter from Rome between the years sixty and sixty-three of our era, during his first imprisonment under the Emperor Nero, as is clear from the Letter itself. It is addressed to the faithful of Philippi, then a celebrated city of Macedonia, but now a miserable village. It was in this city that St. Paul founded the first Christian Church in Europe,[1] which became very flourishing and was lavish in its aid and comfort to the

[1]Acts xvi. 9-40.

Apostle, while a prisoner in Rome. It is one of the most affectionate of the Letters written by St. Paul, and an illustration of how he united in himself the unyielding courage of an apostle and the tenderness of a father, I had almost said, of a mother.

The verses quoted are part of the introduction to the Letter and are full of joyous spiritual good wishes. And now for the explanation.

The Apostle, after cordially saluting, according to his custom, the faithful, the priests, and the deacons at Philippi,[1] and assuring them that, from the day when they first received the Gospel until the day on which he wrote, he had ever preserved a most affectionate memory of them; and, after repeating again his good wishes and giving them some well-deserved praise, goes on: *"We are confident in the Lord Jesus Christ that He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

Having congratulated the Philippians on their past, St. Paul seems to look away into the future and to ask himself: How will it be for time to come? Our beginning has been auspicious; so far well; but shall we persevere in the faith and grace

[1]St. Paul begins all his Letters with salutations, and sometimes they are quite long, except alone that to the Hebrews. There are many reasons given by interpreters for his making this exception

St. Paul salutes first the faithful, then the bishops, and finally the deacons or ministers. Were there, then, many bishops at Philippi? It is not likely. There may have been one of the place, namely Epaphroditus, a disciple of St. Paul, and possibly even he was absent. It seems that in that age the name of bishop was also given to simple priests, and this being taken for granted the sense is clear. It is, indeed, true that this interpretation is not received by all; but it solves all difficulties.

which we have received? And he replies at once: "Yes, I am confident we shall." But in whom does the Apostle put his trust? In men? In their fickle wills? In their feeble strength? In his own watchfulness? No, by no means. The Apostle puts his trust in God, saying: "*We are confident that He, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ.*" It is clear that He, who began the work, is God, who will carry on every good work to a happy conclusion.

You understand, my friends, that St. Paul in these words is speaking of the beginning and the end of our sanctification: *Who hath begun—Who will perfect;* he speaks of the priceless gift of faith: *Who hath begun*—and of the no less priceless gift of perseverance: *Who will perfect.* What does faith teach us concerning these two primary truths? And what are we to hold concerning them? No one has in himself the right to the gift of faith, nor can he merit it. It is something beyond our nature and power, and as the eye can not merit light, or the ear hearing, so neither can man merit faith, which is the first grace and the foundation of all others. Does God of Himself offer this first and fundamental grace to all? Yes; because, so good is He that He wishes all to be saved and none to be lost, and if some do not receive it, the fault is not God's, but solely that of the will of men, who do not do what they should do and could do to merit it. And when man has received faith, or the first gift, and is made a son of God by adoption, has he need of any other grace to preserve the first and to persevere in it to the

end of his life? Yes, and without it man most certainly could not persevere. And can man, strictly speaking, merit the grace of perseverance? No, but God in His goodness will certainly give it to all who put His grace to account, who ask it humbly and who do what they can in their own behalf.[1] Does any man begin a building and not wish to finish it? Or set out on a journey and not wish to get to the end of it? How, then, could the all-wise God begin the work of saving us and not wish to complete it? Or call us to faith and grace and then refuse to let us persevere? No, no; He who began the good work will perfect it.

My friends, how comforting and consoling it is to know that the merciful God has called all of us, gathered here, to the Faith; He has therefore begun *His work* in us, that is, our sanctification, and can we doubt that He will finish it? *He hath begun—He will finish.* But we must keep in mind another and very necessary truth, namely; that our eternal salvation depends primarily upon God and upon His grace, who begins, continues, and finishes; and that it depends next upon ourselves, and if we fail to do our part, all that God does will be of no avail. Bear in mind and store in the memory this truth: God will never fail to do His part, never; He will never fail to work together with us; of this we may be most certain; but the danger is that we shall fail to work together with Him and His grace, and hence if we are lost the fault will be ours and ours only.

"*God will perfect the good work,*" says St. Paul, "*unto the day of Jesus Christ.*" What day

[1]Council of Trent, sess. vi, chap. xiii.

is this? Is it the day of our death, in which our fate will be forever decided and the gift of perseverance will have its completion? Undoubtedly, it would be true to say that our perseverance is completed at our death, but in Scripture phrase the day of God or of Jesus Christ, is the last day, the day of general judgment, on which the sentence pronounced on the day of death is confirmed, and on which the irrevocable destiny of man is sealed by an endless reward or punishment.

Some seem to think that St. Paul, in mentioning perseverance here in connection with the day of final judgment, wished to intimate that this awful day is very near. Nothing could be more erroneous. St. Paul refers here to the day of judgment but does not say that it is distant or near at hand. In fact in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians he prays them not to be disturbed or troubled *"as if the day of the Lord were at hand,"* and says that it will come when least expected, using almost the very words of the Gospel. Let us go on to the next verse.

"As it is meet for me to think this for you all, for that I have you in my heart, and in my bonds and in defense and confirmation of the Gospel, you are all partakers of my joy." St. Paul was gifted with a grand intellect and had been as highly educated at the feet of Gamaliel, as was possible in that age and country,[1] but his knowledge of Greek

[1]Among the Hebrews all education was confined to a study of the Sacred Scriptures, and particularly of the Pentateuch, which contain all the laws: divine, civil, criminal, penal, ceremonial, etc. The Hebrew people were a people eminently isolated from all others, and Moses had so formed them in order to prevent them from falling into idolatry. For them there was no science save that of their Law and of their national history, which they con-

was very imperfect, as is clear from his Letters and as he himself confesses in writing to the Corinthians. One feels that a Hebrew is talking Greek. His style is rugged, his sentences involved, his words and phrases have a Hebrew flavor; hence the difficulty of making out his sense is at times very great, and an instance in point is the sentence just quoted. After telling the Philippians that by the grace of God he is quite assured of their perseverance, he goes on to say in substance that it is proper for him to think and say this, because he held them in his heart: "*I have you in my heart.*" We frequently say of one we deeply love: "I keep you in my heart. . . . I bear you in my heart. . . . I have you in my heart," and other such phrases. The heart is the organ and seat of love, and to express love for another we usually say: "I keep you in my heart." St. Paul means to say: "You will persevere in the Gospel, this is my hope, and it is

founded with the divine law, or, what is the same, with divine revelation. Hence with the sciences and arts, with history and letters, or with any other sort of knowledge existing outside of his nation, the Hebrew did not concern himself; rather he suspected these and had a horror of them, as if they were a kind of idolatry. Later on, after the captivity of Babylon, and still later, after the diffusion of Greek civilization in the East, this horror, entertained by the Hebrews of everything Pagan, went on diminishing, and of this we have a proof in the time of the Machabees and in the inspired Books themselves of that epoch, in which may be discerned the influence of Greek science. This was a natural consequence of the political and scientific movement of that time and of the forced contact of Israel with neighboring peoples and with Greek and Roman civilization. Philo and Josephus the Hebrew would not have been possible two centuries earlier. Paul was a disciple of Gamaliel, and, although his education had been restricted almost solely to the Mosaic Law, according to the spirit of the Pharisees, the intransigeants of that age, he nevertheless had some trace, some tincture of Greek science and culture. See Card. Meignan where he speaks of the Machabees.

gratifying for me to think so, because I love you, and how can I help loving you, since you are partakers of my grace,[1] and have so lovingly aided and comforted me during my imprisonment and in the struggle I am making in preaching the Gospel."

It should be remarked here that the loyal Philippians, hearing of St. Paul's imprisonment in Rome, speedily sent Epaphroditus to comfort him and provide for his wants. This act of tender love and kindness deeply touched him, and hence he called them his companions and the sharers of his chains and of his defense and confirmation of the Gospel. It is the nature of love to make joys and sorrows common among those who love, and hence mutual aid among them is a necessity, and the impulse to render aid will be in the measure of the intensity of their love one for another. This is a truth that needs no proof. The love of the first Christians for one another was so great that even the Gentiles marveled at it and pointing to them said: "See how those Christians love one another." This is why the churches of Greece, as St. Paul informs us, sent aid to the churches in Palestine, suffering from famine; it was the first example of mutual charity which the Pagan world had ever seen and it was amazed at the sight. The Greeks succored the Jews, whose country they knew not and to whom they were strangers in language and in all else except faith and charity, which made them all brothers.

[1]In the Greek text the reading is *partakers of my grace,* which the Vulgate translates, *partakers of my joy;* since grace causes joy; the meaning is the same, though I have adhered to the Greek reading.

And how comes it that peoples who are strangers to one another, who are separated by mountains and seas, whose usages and interests are diverse, whose laws and traditions are different, are bound to one another as brothers in Christ and materially aid one another in distress? It comes from the very nature of Christianity. All the members of the Catholic Church, scattered over the face of the earth, from north to south, from east to west, are bound together in mind by one faith, in heart by one hope and by one all-pervading charity toward God and their neighbor, and constitute one tremendous, united, and solid body, and this unity is their glory and their strength. St. Paul weeps in a prison in Rome and with him weep the Christians of Philippi and Corinth, of Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Jerusalem. Thus the Church constitutes only one body and has only one heart; one feels for all, and all for each.

May this admirable unity and solidity, so conspicuous in the days of St. Paul, be also manifest in our days; may the people be one with their pastors, the pastors with the bishops, and the bishops with the Bishop of bishops; may they be one body with common sufferings and common sorrows, common victories and common triumphs.

"*For God is my witness how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.*" I can scarcely say how these words of burning affection, which so evidently come from a full heart, touch every fiber of my soul, or how deeply they affect me. I picture that man of iron lying at the bottom of his prison, pale, wasted, and broken with watching, fasting, and suffering, bent under the weight

of years and cares, loaded with irons and in view of the scaffold, and yet forgetful of himself and his trials, finding words to give expression to his affection, and, as if fearing that his beloved Philippians would doubt of it, calling on God to witness what he says: *"God is my witness how I long after you all."* He makes no distinction between rich and poor, literate and illiterate; they are all his children and he embraces them all with equal affection: *You all.* And why does he love them all equally? Because he does not consider their gifts or their personal qualities; he considers them all in Jesus Christ: *"In the bowels of Jesus Christ."* This is the great law of genuine charity. If you regard man as an individual, you will often find it difficult to love him, and you will be moved to thrust him from you. This one is clad in filthy rags and covered with offensive sores; another is vulgar and rude, ignorant, stupid, and heartless; a third is vicious and a drunkard, lazy and irascible, petulant and insolent; how, if we follow our natural impulse, can we love such wretched beings, even though we realize that they are our brothers? We feel a repugnance to go near them, or to talk to them, or to touch them. But if our thoughts are fixed on God, who created them; on Jesus Christ, who so loved them that He died for them and gave Himself to them as food; in a word, if we think of them, as St. Paul did, in the bowels of Jesus Christ and in His love, we can not do other than love them; either we must deny Jesus Christ or love them in and through Him. This is the explanation of the heroism of the saints and of souls

enamored of Jesus Christ, who pass their days in hospitals and pest-houses, in orphanages and houses of mourning, in distant missions and savage lands, consecrating their lives to the service of the sick and to the instruction of the ignorant, whom they do not even know and whose gratitude they are certain they will never receive. They love them in the bowels of Jesus Christ. They have Jesus Christ alone in their thoughts and to Him alone they look for their reward. It is a consoling thought, and one that proves that the spirit of the Church is ever the same, to see in our day the Catholics of Europe giving so lavishly to the churches of the East, to the missions of China, to orphanages in Africa and to Christian schools established among the heathen. In the Catholic Church there are no national boundaries, there is only one immense family of the children of God.

"I love you in Jesus Christ," cries out St. Paul, "and because I love you, I long for you and I beg that every blessing may be yours." And what blessing is it he asks in the excess of his love for his children? "*That your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding.*" What sort of charity? True charity, exercised toward God and our brethren, a charity that is the fulfilling of the law and is the queen of all virtues; a charity that is united with knowledge: *in knowledge,* with the knowledge of the truth, and with discretion, or prudence, in well doing.

It will be useful here, and this seems the proper place, to correct a notion with regard to charity which might lead to our taking a wrong view of

it. It would seem that some, listening to sermons on charity and hearing its praises, fancy that it consists wholly in loving all persons and doing good promiscuously; that it matters little whether or not they are deserving; and that charity is done blindfold or with closed eyes. St. Paul here condemns this harmful error in these words: "*May your charity more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding.*"

All the acts of our life, also all our thoughts and desires, all our words, should, if we are men, be subject to the great law of reason; if we are Christians, to the great law of reason and faith; in other words, to the great law of truth. It, and it alone, is the guide of every thought and act, and whatever is conformable to the truth is good, and whatever is not conformable to the truth is bad. Hence to imagine a virtue that is not the daughter of truth, would be to imagine beauty of color without light, or a beautiful house without symmetry, or a beautiful body without a proper proportion in its members. Truth is the only foundation of virtue, and therefore of charity, the queen of all virtues. Charity should love and work according to truth, and if it departs from truth, or, worse still, if it works contrary to truth, it is no longer a virtue, but a vice.

To love our neighbor by doing good to him, if he is vicious, is but to drive him farther into vice, and by our love and beneficence to confirm him in it; to love our neighbor by allowing him to sleep on in his error from fear of giving him pain, is not charity, but an offense against charity; it is to hate him. A physician who, from love of a

sick patient, would not give him a bitter medicine or take off a gangrened member, would not love, rather he would hate, the sick man; and the same is true of a father, who from love of a wayward child would not correct and punish him. No one had a greater charity to men than Jesus Christ; He so loved them that He gave His life for them, but He did not shut His eyes to their errors or keep silence as to their faults; He laid bare their passions and did not hesitate, when occasion offered and good could be done, to wound their ill-concealed self-love. This is true charity, a charity which is the daughter of truth, of knowledge and prudence; this is the charity that St. Paul prayed that the Philippians might have: *"May your charity more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding."*

I pray God that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and prudence—and why? In order that you may distinguish things that are contrary one to the other, or the true from the false, the good from the bad, that you may shun the bad and the false and cling to the good and the true: *"That you may approve the better things."* This is what St. Paul says also to the Thessalonians:[1] *"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."* Our religion is charged with injuring and almost destroying the reason; St. Paul bears witness to the contrary; he exhorts the faithful to use their reason to distinguish good from evil, the better from the good, and the true from the false, and to govern themselves according to knowledge and prudence. Certainly, this

[1] 1 Thess. v. 21.

test must be made in the light of faith, but always with the reason, because reason as well as faith is a gift of God, and as the rights of faith are inviolable, so also are the rights of reason; and if we offend God by rejecting faith, we also offend Him by not respecting reason. We shall respect both by combining and harmonizing the two lights —that of faith and that of reason, since both come from God and lead up to Him, the fount of all truth. St. Paul goes on: *"That you may be sincere or upright, and without offense unto the day of Christ,"* that is, that you may be blameless, pure in faith, and cleansed of every stain at the day of judgment, when the works of every one will be revealed.

Twice in these few verses St. Paul reminds us of one of the most terrible truths of faith, namely, that God will be our Judge; and he does so with reason; because the certainty that there will come a day when our every thought and affection, our every word and deed, will be laid bare before the whole world and judged by the infallible God, who will reward justly or punish inexorably, fills us with a wholesome fear and constrains us to provide now against that day, by anticipating the judgment we can not then escape. *"Judge yourselves,"* says St. Paul elsewhere, *"and you shall not be judged."*

And the last verse runs thus: And thus will you be *"filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God."* It is not enough to be clean of every stain; it is also necessary to be rich in the *fruit of justice,* that is, in upright and holy deeds, without which faith is

dead. The Apostle is careful here to remind us of another truth, which he frequently repeats, namely, that like faith and the works of faith, the fruits of justice must come from grace, of which Jesus Christ is the fountain: *"Through Jesus Christ."* And as everything that comes to us, comes to us through Jesus Christ, so every thing must be directed to the praise and glory of God, the ultimate end of all our works and of His.

HOMILY XX

At that time: The Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: for Thou dost not regard the person of men: Tell us therefore what dost Thou think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the coin of the tribute. And they offered Him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to Him: Cæsar's. Then He saith to them: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.—Gospel, *Matt.* xxii. 15-21.

You have heard the Gospel of this Sunday, which has an especial interest for us all, inasmuch as it treats of a very important doctrine, that concerns each of us individually.

The event narrated in the Gospel took place in Jerusalem, in the Temple, or rather in the vestibule or portico of the Temple, on the Tuesday, or, at the latest, on the Wednesday preceding the death of Jesus Christ. As more time than usual will be required to explain these few verses I shall at once proceed to comment on them.

Jesus had only lately spoken the parable of the inhuman vine dressers, who had killed the son of the owner of the vineyard sent to gather the vintage, and had given His hearers clearly to understand that God would reject the people of Israel and call another to take its place. There was no mistaking the meaning of the parable, and its terrible threat had deeply wounded the Scribes and Pharisees, who, as the Gospel notes, would have laid violent hands on Jesus, had they not feared the people, who gathered about Him and applauded Him. The Scribes and Pharisees always stood in awe of the people. What did they do? Listen.

"*The Pharisees went and consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in His speech.*" A great philosopher, speaking of man, said a very true thing, namely "that he seems sometimes an angel and sometimes a devil." Look at the Scribes and Pharisees; they follow Our Lord everywhere, they haunt His steps, they search His words and scrutinize His acts, and yet they never found a fault in Him; His life was most holy, His teaching admirable; He was kind, patient, and unselfish; He was all love for the suffering, all zeal for God's glory; He harmed none, did good to all, and His path was luminous with miracles. What

do they want? Why do not they unite their voices with those of the people and hail Him as a man of God and a prophet? No, they hate Him, because His life and teaching are a condemnation of their own. They come together in council, and for what? Possibly to examine His teaching and His miracles and to resolve to follow Him if these prove to be true? Possibly to study His prophecies and ascertain if they are fulfilled in Him? By no means; they gather in council to take Him in some slip, to draw from Him some word which they can make the head of an accusation against Him; *to ensnare Him in His speech.* Wicked perversity of mind! To lay snares and dig pitfalls for a brother! And they were men who were always meditating on the Sacred Scriptures, who fasted, and who set themselves up as men zealous for the glory of God and of His law! Such is the potency of passion once it takes possession of the human heart; there is no crime to which it will not drive a man, and examples of like iniquity are not wanting in our own day in those who are the heirs to the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees.

And this is what they are to set themselves to do after taking council: *"The Pharisees sent their disciples with the Herodians to Jesus."* It is instructive to dwell a few moments on these words of the Gospel. On another occasion I told you who the Pharisees were; but here we will turn our attention to a matter that more fully illustrates their perfidy. The Pharisees, besides being rigid observers of the Law, also represented the national Jewish party, whose members furiously hated the Roman domination and were waiting for

the hour when they might rise up and win back their liberty; their patriotism gave them a great influence over the people. The Herodians, on the contrary, formed the party of Herod Antipas, king of Galilee, who at that time had come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pasch. This Herod was the son of the Herod who slew the Innocents, and it was he who put John Baptist to death. He was a stranger, a friend of the Romans, and their tributary. Naturally, the Herodians were both in religion and politics antagonistic to the Pharisees,[1] but now they put aside their party differences and their hostility and join hands in weaving a plot against Jesus. The stern partisans of national independence and the abject vassals of a strange king, a skeptic, cruel and dissolute, and a faithful ally of the country's oppressors, these two opposing parties, Pharisees and Herodians, enter into a compact against Jesus. The politics of every age is full of these guilty and disgraceful alliances.

Having had an understanding among themselves, the Pharisees and Herodians went humbly to Jesus, as scholars might go to a master, desirous of learning and ready to do his bidding in everything, and proposed a case of conscience to Him. The better to deceive and entrap Him, if it were possible, they began by praising Him in fulsome and lying phrase. Listen to the mellifluous words

[1]It was but natural that the Hebrews should detest the Herods, both father and son. They were usurpers and tyrants, and the worst of all tyrants was the father, surnamed the Great, likely ironically so called. But there is no tyrant who has not his party, and Herod had his, as we learn from the Talmud. At the head of the Sanhedrim there were two great Rabbis, *Hillel* and *Manahem*. The latter, seduced by gold and ambition and by other

of those hypocrites: "*Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker.*" They call Him master and a Doctor of the Law, a title held in high esteem among the Jews; they call Him master, as if to intimate that they would be His disciples, whereas their only thought was to dishonor and betray Him: "*We know that Thou art a true speaker.*" They praise Him as an honest and an upright man, and, as if this were not enough, they add: "*Thou teachest the way of God in truth,*" that is: "Thou art a safe guide and dost point out the way that leads to God; Thou wilt put us on the path to truth and heaven." But even this is not enough: "*Neither carest Thou for any man,*" which is as much as to say: "Thou fearest neither Cæsar nor Herod, neither the princes nor the people; *Thou dost not regard the person of men;*" or: "Thou lovest only truth, Thou fearest only God, and Thou desirest naught but to teach those who seek to know the safe way." Fuller and more magnificent praise, as you see, could not be given to Our Lord, and had it been sincere it would have merited a splendid reward for him who spoke it. But coming from the lips of those men it was a base lie, a wicked device to deceive the divine Master. They praised Him to instigate Him to say openly what they wished to hear from His lips, that they might be able to accuse and ruin Him, as you will presently learn.[1] When we see

means, passed over to the service of Herod and was followed by eighty others of the principal man, richly attired. This was the origin of the party known as the Herodians.—Didon, vol. ii., p. 192.

[1] "Adulatione putant eum ita inflare et audacem reddere, ut contra institutas leges et præsentem rerum statum quidpiam dicat."—St. Joan. Chrysost.

such insolent and shameless perfidy and hypocrisy we are indignant, and justly so. But allow me to ask: Are the arts of treachery, lying, adulation, perfidy, hypocrisy, and deceit so rare among us, that we should be surprised at the Pharisees and Herodians? My friends, it is for you to answer. Leave the arts of seducing and deceiving your brother to the Pharisees and Herodians, but do you abominate and detest them.

When they had paved the way with all this hypocritical praise, those wicked men laid their snare, saying: *"What dost Thou think, is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?"* It would be difficult to think out a snare more subtle and dangerous; and to fathom the depth of its malice, consider what I am about to say. The Romans had ruled over the Jews for about a hundred years and had sent to govern the country now kings and tetrarchs, and again proconsuls and governors, as they saw fit. The Jews, and especially the Galileans, chafed under this domination of the stranger; the national pride and religious sentiment were humiliated and wounded by being ruled by Pagans; they impatiently awaited the coming of the time when they could cast off this hated yoke; and they placed their hopes in the future Messias. The Scribes and Pharisees and priests were the soul of this patriotic and religious party, which thirty years later rose in fierce rebellion and provoked the utter extermination of the nation. Every Jew was obliged to pay yearly a personal tax of one denarius, or about eighty cents of our money. It was commonly believed that it was not lawful to pay this tax, since it was exacted

by a stranger and a usurper, and, still more, a Pagan.

Now the question was put pointedly to Our Lord, who was in the vestibule and, it is thought, surrounded by a great crowd: *"What thinkest Thou, is it lawful or not to pay tribute to Cæsar?"*[1] Jesus must give a decisive answer, Yes, or, No. If He replied, "Yes, the tribute must be paid," He would be to the Jews an enemy to national independence, a partisan, and a supporter of a stranger, and almost impious, because He would have gone over to the heathen, and would necessarily lose favor with the people; if He said, "No, it is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar," they would accuse Him to the Roman governor, then residing in Jerusalem, and would have Him condemned as a rebel to established authority.[2] There was no escaping the snare, so those wretched men thought; He must say plainly whether He is an enemy to His country or an enemy to the Romans, and in either alternative He is lost.[3] It seems clear, all things considered, that an answer favorable to the national party was expected; He was a Galilean, and the Galileans were notoriously ardent patriots; He was a friend of the people,

[1]Note the question: *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?* The word "tribute" is used because it is a foreign word and supremely offensive to the people.

[2]We know that among the accusations brought against Jesus before Pilate was this: He forbids the *paying of the tribute to Cæsar*. It was a calumny, but His accusers knew well what a powerful influence such an accusation would exert on the mind of the Roman governor. And while they themselves held it to be unlawful to pay tribute, they accused Jesus of forbidding it!

[3]"Bicipiti complexione insidiantes, ut quodlibet eligens caperetur. Si licere responderet, tamquam reus esset adversus populum Dei; si autem diceret, non licere, tamquam Cæsaris adversarius perimeretur.—ST. AUGUSTINE, Cont. Cresconium, lib. i, c. xvii.

of the weak and suffering; He took on the character of the Messias and preached a new kingdom; it seemed certain that He would condemn the tribute, which was a symbol of servitude to the stranger. With a few words He unmasked the hypocrites; He spurned the snare, and for the first time in this world established the wonderful doctrine on the relations between the civil authority and the sacred, or religious.

Jesus, knowing their evil purpose, said: *"Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites?"* It was a harsh but well-merited rebuke. "You pretend to be men of tender conscience, fearing to offend God and violate the divine Law, and yet you wish to wring from My lips words wherewith to incriminate Me; under pretext of religion you lay snares for Me, ye hypocrites and tempters. *Show Me the coin of tribute." And they offered Him a penny.*

Among the Hebrews two kinds of money were current, one the profane and Roman, the other the sacred and Jewish. The first bore the image of Cæsar or of some Pagan divinity, the second bore no image at all, this being severely prohibited by the Mosaic Law.[1] The Hebrews, particularly when paying tribute for the Temple and for all sacred purposes, used only their own money; but for all profane purposes, especially in paying tribute to the emperor, they used the Pagan money, bearing the image of Cæsar or of some heathen divinity.

This is why Jesus said: *"Show Me the coin of tribute* or the money wherewith you pay tribute to Cæsar." It is not likely that the Pharisees had

[1]Deut. iv. 16.

any of this money with them, as the very fact of carrying it would have been to their tender consciences a wicked idolatry; but the Herodians, who had no such scruples, would certainly have it, or it could easily be had from the money-changers in the court of the Gentiles, who sat at their tables exchanging Roman for Jewish money.

The coin of tribute was handed to Jesus, who naturally placing it in His left hand and pointing to it with the index finger of His right, turned to His questioners and said: *"Whose image and inscription is this?"*[1] They answer: *"Cæsar's."* "Very well," said Jesus: *"Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."* Note that Jesus did not say: "Give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's and to God what is God's," but He said: "Render or restore to Cæsar what you have received from Cæsar and to God what you have received from God. This money you have from Cæsar; it is but just that you should restore at least part of it for the common needs and the services he does you."

This is the well-known sentence of the Saviour, which, while it could not be more clear or of deeper meaning, has nevertheless been quoted both by the defenders of the rights of the Church and by the defenders of the rights of the State, each putting a different interpretation upon the words.

Before beginning to explain this sentence allow me to make a remark which I think important at this time.

[1]The image must have been that either of Cæsar Augustus or of Tiberius with the usual legend: *Divo Tiberio Cæsari*, etc.

The Romans ruled in Judea; they were aliens and their right to be there was the right of conquerors. Was their sovereign authority lawful?[1] Theirs was a government *de facto;* was it therefore illegitimate and usurped? Into this thorny question Jesus did not enter, nor did He ever in the course of His preaching touch upon the subject, not that occasions for doing so were wanting, or that He might not, if He would, have set the matter at rest by a single word. He always confined Himself, in whatever He said or did, to maintaining constituted authority and to inculcating respect for it and obedience to it, without even remotely touching upon the question as to whether it was or was not legitimate in its origin. This is a great example left by our divine Master for our imitation, which we should never lose sight of and which, if faithfully followed, will prevent all confusion.

With Pagans, and in a measure also with the Herodians, all power was concentrated in Cæsar and in their king; Cæsar was emperor and pontiff; the supreme, absolute civil power and the supreme, absolute religious power were both completely in his hands and he was subject to no one. Of this monstrous concentration of absolute religious power in the one who holds the civil, there still remains an example among the Mussulmans, with whom the sultan is everything.

[1]À Lapide goes out of his way to prove that the Romans were the legitimate masters of Judea; he has many valid arguments, but I fancy that others, and still stronger, could be adduced to show that they were usurpers. What right had the Romans to occupy Judea? None; they had the right of conquest, which

Jesus Christ in His answer implicitly, but none the less clearly, states that Cæsar is not everything, nor is all power His; that God must be taken into account and the power of God; and that man should render unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's and unto God what is God's. There are therefore two powers, distinct one from the other, and although subordinated, each has its own distinct rights and toward each we have distinct duties; and it is the expressed will of Jesus Christ that these two powers, the *power* of Cæsar and the *power* of God, should be recognized and revered. Both of them come from God, as both the body and the soul come from God, but in a different way; and as they are different in nature and excellence, so are they different in their purpose and end. Man, by reason of His body, its needs, its external life, its well-being and security, primarily depends on God, yet he necessarily belongs to his country and is subject to the power of Cæsar and to the civil authority; by reason of his soul, of his conscience, of his spiritual needs and aspirations he belongs to another country, his heavenly country, and is subject to God and to the authority of the Church, which is God's representative here below. Each of us on coming into the world becomes subject to these two powers, which can no more be confounded than can body and soul, and can not be opposed one to the other unless by the ignorance and malice of men.

substantially is the right of force, but force never creates right. Time was not long since when the right of conquest was commonly admitted, and yet a great cry was raised against an accomplished fact, which is nothing more or less than the right of force. Such is the logic of men.

What is the field for the exercise of the power of Cæsar or the civil authority? Its end and office is to co-operate for the preservation, protection, and development of the life of the body, to guard the rights of families and individuals, of person and property; to curb the wicked and render them harmless; to shield the weak; to keep every citizen from overstepping his rights and trespassing upon the rights of others; its end and office is to develop the wealth of the country, by protecting and favoring agriculture, the primary source of all wealth, and by encouraging industry and commerce through facilities for transportation on land and sea; its end and duty is to defend the country from its enemies, whether from within or from without, by maintaining peace and observing justice; in fine, its end and duty is to procure for all citizens such temporal happiness as is possible here below, and from which the knowledge of truth, obedience to just laws, the practice of virtue, and war on error, injustice, and vice, are inseparable. Now, to obtain this high and multiform end the civil power must be provided with the necessary means, which are public authority and money, and hence it has a right to both in so far as they are necessary for its purpose. This is why Christ holding in His hand the coin of the tribute, said: "*Render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's,*" that is, pay him the tribute money, because without it he could not discharge the duties of his office and maintain public order, and if he could not, society would be upheaved.

What is the field of the sacred and religious power that resides in the Church and in her Su-

preme Head? Its primary end and office is to put into every soul the seed of divine life; to preserve, protect, and develop it in the individual, the family, and society; and this is done by such instruction as is adequate to the needs of each and of all; by the administration of the sacraments; by the action of her government and her laws, which, emanating from the Supreme Head, reach out to all subordinate heads, to bishops and priests, and then on down to the humblest of the faithful. Its end and office is to shield her children against error and vice, to maintain the rights of truth and virtue, and to lead the faithful on to eternal life. A secondary end of the Church is to watch and prevent the State from failing in its duties, or worse, from abusing the power it has over the body. Now to attain this most holy and noble end the religious and sacred power must have the necessary agencies, which are the priesthood, both diocesan and regular; its various educational establishments for teaching; its public worship and its churches and the material means necessary to procure these agencies; but it needs, above all, a stable and ample freedom of action in order to bring into play all its forces for the sanctification of mankind. This is what Our Lord meant by the second half of the sentence: *"Render to God the things that are God's."*

As I have said, two kinds of money were current among the Jews, the one profane the other sacred; one symbolized the worldly and political right, the other the heavenly and divine: one the tribute to be rendered unto Cæsar, the other the tribute to be paid to the Temple and to God. Let

us faithfully pay both the one and the other and we shall fulfill our whole duty.[1]

Those who exercise these two powers, on which depend peace and prosperity here, and happiness both in time and in eternity, should leave nothing undone to prevent any clash between them, and they should try to harmonize their laws and to work together, so that they may be a mutual aid to each other. And since the sacred and religious power is by reason of its end and its agencies above the civil, and because the civil power may derive great advantage from its support, it is to its interest, not only not to embarrass the Church's

[1]The words of Jesus Christ, clear indeed and peremptory, may give rise to many grave questions, and among others this: He bids us to give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's and to God that which is God's. So far, well. And what is that which is Cæsar's, and what is that which is God's? All things belong to God; everything is His, is always His, and is His absolutely; who will gainsay it? What, then, remains to Cæsar? Absolutely speaking, nothing.

It will be answered that God, the owner of all things, has divided the government of the world, assigning the government of the soul to the priesthood, and the government of the body to Cæsar.

Very well, but can the soul be separated from the body or the body from the soul? No. Whosoever governs the soul must pass through the body, and, in governing the soul, he governs also the body; similarly, whosoever governs the body, must act on the soul, and, at least, to some extent govern also the soul. To separate the two is absurd, and hence the great difficulty of keeping apart the two fields, on which the action of the two powers is exerted, in such a way that they will not come into violent conflict one with the other. In theory it is very easy to say: "Give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's and to God what is God's," but when it comes down to practice enormous difficulties arise, as all history bears witness. As Leo XIII said, two powers, each perfectly autonomous in its sphere, acting upon the same individuals in their character of citizens and Christians, will very easily find themselves in opposition to each other and if one is not subordinate to the other, a quarrel is inevitable. But the civil power will not hear of such a thing as subordination, and then the struggle becomes not only inevitable, but legitimate, which is absurd.

action, but indirectly to facilitate it. The civil power has nothing to fear from the sacred and religious, by which it can only be benefited and from which it receives its securest guarantee of progress and tranquillity, since the religious teaches all in the name of God that it is a conscientious duty *"to render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's."*

The Church, my friends, is not concerned about who is the ruler of the State or about the form of government which it adopts; whether power is lodged in the hands of one or of many; or whether it is held for life or for limited time; or whether it is absolute or limited, elective, or hereditary, monarchical or republican; or whether it resides in this dynasty or that. The Church is not of this age or that, of this or that people or nation; she is of all ages and peoples and nations, because she must endure to the end of time and gather beneath her tents all peoples, even the most diverse in language, customs, character, aspirations, and culture. She can not bind her doctrines up with monarchies or constitutions or republics, or with kings or emperors as such; she looks steadily upward to heaven, the supreme goal of her pilgrimage across this changeable world; she spurns the hand of no one who offers it; she welcomes the assistance of all men of good will; she does not dictate a form of government; and, speaking for herself, she demands of no prince or ruler to prove authentically that his claim is legitimate, and she respects the rights of all. One thing above all others she asks, and that is to have a free hand and a clear field, and she is grateful to all

who assist her even when they do not profess the Faith that she preaches and preserves inviolate at the cost of blood and life.

And should any power cross her path and stay her progress, harass her and plot against her, what does she do? Then she protests in the name of the rights of conscience, which have been outraged; she defends her rights, and proclaims them; she remains patient, using such means as she has at hand and thinks necessary for her defense; and her children loyally follow her lead, knowing that there are emergencies when God must be obeyed rather than man, and place their trust in that Providence, which lovingly watches over all and more especially over His Church. She is never seen rushing into the highways and into the public squares instigating the populace against the powers that be, even though they are abusing their rights; and never is a word heard coming from her lips inciting the people to angry revolt against authority. She goes her way, following in the footsteps of her Head and Spouse, Jesus Christ.

Saving the rights of His eternal Father, He always wished to be subject to the laws of His country and to those of the Roman authority; and if the chief priests, His countrymen, plotted against Him and persecuted Him, He answered them, or He was silent, or withdrew sorrowing; He paid the tribute for Himself and Peter; never was He known to mix up in political questions; and when the crowd wished forcibly to seize Him and make Him King, at a time and in a manner they should not, He adroitly released Himself and

fled, and when brought before Pilate He recognized in Him the authority that came from God. The apostles, though they openly maintained that God must be obeyed rather than man, still taught the same doctrine as their Master, affirming that all power comes from God; that we must obey, not from fear, but because it is a conscientious duty; that he who resists authority resists God Himself; that kings must be honored and tribute paid; that we must pray for rulers in order that we may live tranquilly and in peace, even though these rulers be Roman emperors, a Claudius and a Nero, who put to death St. Peter and St. Paul, the princes of the apostles.

This is the royal road along which the Church, after the pattern of Jesus Christ and the apostles, pursues her course, and she will ever continue to pursue the same course in her relations with the civil powers of this world. I ask you, my friends, could there be a doctrine plainer than this or more conformable to the principles of true liberty and authority, of public welfare and social order? When the powers of this world know the Church as she is, can they reasonably mistrust her, or keep a suspicious eye on her; or harass her or make war on her as on an enemy? It would be to mistrust a common mother, to suspect and make trouble for a loyal friend; it would be to make war on the best of allies.

There are still some reflections to be made on the last half of the sentence of Christ: "*Render to God the things that are God's,*" and then we shall make an end of the homily. We must render to God what is God's. Very well, and what is

God's? I have only one answer to make and it is this: Whatever we are in body and soul, whatever we have or can have outside of us, all is God's. Is there a single thing in heaven or on earth, within us or without, in body or soul, in the present or the future, which was not created and is not preserved by Him? No, says the great apostle, everything is from Him and by Him and in Him; everything should be given back to God, who alone is the absolute owner of all, and if we keep back a single tittle as our own, we are faithless servants, we usurp and steal what belongs to God.

But you will say: If everything is God's and must be faithfully restored to Him, how is it that Jesus Christ said that there are things that must be rendered to Cæsar, and I will add, that must be rendered to every one in authority, aye to parents and children, to friends and benefactors, to rich and poor, to all, and lastly to ourselves? The answer is very easy: Whatever we render to Cæsar or to those in authority, to parents and children, to benefactors and friends, to rich and poor, to ourselves and to every one else, if just and honest, is rendered to God Himself, who so wills and commands. And here we must admire the wisdom and goodness of God, who counts as rendered to Him whatever we do for others, when He so directs by the laws either of nature or of grace, and thus everything is elevated and ennobled, and works done for man, or creatures, will be done for our God and Creator, the beginning and end of all.

All creatures, from the highest to the lowest, are

the works of God, the daughters of His mind and the creations of His omnipotent hand; and therefore all without exception have impressed upon them the image of God; and if they have it not, or if it could be effaced, they would cease to exist, and God would cease to be their creator and preserver; and the higher these creatures are in the order of nature, the more beautiful is the image of God that shines forth in them, and hence in men and angels it is incomparably more resplendent and glorious than either in plants, or birds, or animals. Moreover in men and angels, besides the image of nature, which is impressed upon them as creatures, there is added another image, which is transcendently more luminous than that of nature and, when radiant with grace, still more strikingly and vividly mirrors the divine beauty. As the coin of tribute showed imprinted upon it the image of Cæsar, which Christ, pointing to, said: *"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,"* so every creature round about us, and beyond all else our soul, created by God and remade and ineffably beautified by Jesus Christ, reflects the image of God and says in its mute and eloquent speech: "I belong to God, I belong to Jesus Christ." Let us, then, be just and pay to God and Jesus Christ what is His and what is due to Him. But be careful not to change or disfigure the image of God and of Jesus Christ; keep it whole and beautiful, so that He may recognize it as His own and that it may be a glory to Him and to us. Tertullian says: "Render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to God what is God's; that is, render to Cæsar the image of Cæsar, stamped on

the coin, and to God the image of God which is in man, thus rendering money to Cæsar and ourselves to God.'"[1] It will be nothing short of disastrous to you, my friends, if you deface the image of God within you. To do so would be high treason against God.

[1]"Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris Cæsari, et quæ sunt Dei Deo, idest imaginem Cæsaris Cæsari et imaginem Dei Deo, quæ in homine est, ut Cæsari quidem pecuniam reddas, Deo temetipsum" (De Idolat. c. xv).

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XXI

BE FOLLOWERS of me, brethren, and observe them who walk so as you have our model. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction: whose God is their belly: and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my dearly-beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved: I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women that have labored with me in the Gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.—EPISTLE, *Phil.* iii. 17-21; iv. 1-3.

THESE sentences, so full of fatherly affection, are also taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the faithful of the Church of Philippi. Nearly the whole of that Letter comes before us in the course of the ecclesiastical year. The method we follow of explaining the apostolic Letters, word by word and sentence by sentence, has this inconvenience, that

we must frequently repeat the same truths, but it has also considerable advantages, among which is that of reading one by one the beautiful and eloquent exhortations of the Apostle; of knowing the needs, the trials, and the blessings of that primitive and fresh Christianity, which differs little from our own; of listening, I had almost said one by one, to the beatings of that heart, all zeal for the saving of souls; and of penetrating every thought, even the least, of that great mind. It has been said, and truly, that the easiest and best way to know a man is to read his letters, and this is singularly true of the Apostle. Even the casual reading and study of these admirable Letters lets us into the very depths of that incomparable soul and makes us conscious of all its greatness.

But let us put aside all introduction and go straight to the commentary of these eight verses.

In building a wall the mason, before putting down a fresh stone, assures himself, by testing with his hand, that the one already down is solid; so also must I, before beginning to explain the lesson of to-day's Epistle, refer to some preceding sentences, so that the connection between the two and their harmony may be made clear.

St. Paul first exhorts the Philippians to be joyful with a holy joy and to be on their guard against Judaisers, who wished to ally Christianity with the Law of Moses; next, he tells them that the truly circumcised, the real Israelites, are the Christians, who have the circumcision of the spirit and not that of the flesh; next, he reminds them that he had been a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but that he now accounts Judaism as dung, that

he may gain Christ, who drew him to Himself; he then goes on exhorting them all to do as he had done, saying: *"Be you followers of me."* The power of example over our minds, my friends, is great, more potent far than the power of words. When we see an exalted personage, one who is our leader, going in advance, facing dangers and surmounting the greatest difficulties, we are impelled in spite of ourselves to follow him, and at times even cowards, thus inspired, become heroes. Simon Machabeus arrived with his army on the banks of an impetuous torrent; the soldiers frightened, hesitated in presence of the danger; Simon at once cast himself into the stream and crossed over, and the whole army, fired with enthusiasm, followed his example. The remnants of the grand army of Russia gathered in thousands on the banks of the Beresina; the bridge was destroyed; the Cossacks were pressing upon their heels; the river was half covered with ice, and the soldiers, stiff from cold and filled with fright, did not dare within reach of the enemy, to attempt to rebuild the bridge, and irreparable disaster was impending. A general leaped into the river and stood there for hours up to his neck in freezing water, with ice all around him, encouraging the soldiers and directing the workmen, who were rebuilding the bridge, and thus saved the remains of the army.[1] Example works prodigies. We ecclesiastics should go before you laymen, illuminating the way, and wo to us if we do not, for of this we shall

[1]This fact is vividly described by M. Thiers in his History of the Empire. The intrepid general, thoroughly French in temperament, was Elbe, who died shortly afterward.

have to render the strictest account to the Supreme General. And you too, fathers and mothers, and you also, masters and mistresses, all you who exercise any authority, must go before your children, your dependents, and those subject to you, leading them on by the light of your example and encouraging them, saying to them in the words of St. Paul: *"Be ye imitators of me."*

And is not this pride in St. Paul? Does he not set himself up as an example of perfection? Why should he not rather have said: "Be ye imitators of Jesus Christ?" No, this is not pride in that apostle, who in his Letters over and over again avows his faults, and who only a few lines before confessed that he had been a stubborn Jew and a persecutor of the Church. To speak the truth when the speaking of it will benefit others, even though it may bring credit to the speaker, is not pride, if the intention be pure. Finally, if St. Paul here puts himself forward as a pattern, he at once associates others with himself, saying: *"Observe them who walk so as you have our model;"* that is, follow those who pursue the same course that I do; he thus encourages the faithful to imitate, not alone himself, but all who keep the paths of truth and virtue. And surely the Philippians had need of good example and of being encouraged to imitate him, for they had among them men, and many of them, whose lives were a scandal. Listen to the words of St. Paul:

"Many, of whom I have told you often and now tell you weeping, so walk that they are enemies of the cross of Christ. Be on your guard," says the Apostle, "for if many of you pursue the

straight path, and these you can and should follow, many more pursue the crooked way, and these you should shun. Who are they? They are men against whom I warned you, when I was with you, and you know them; men who by their perverse teachings and their shocking conduct fill me with grief and cause me to weep tears of bitterness; I tell you: *They are enemies of the cross of Christ.*" By the word *cross,* of course, St. Paul did not here wish to signify the material cross; he undoubtedly meant the teaching of Christ, using a figure which is also common with us. Still, there must be some specific reason why St. Paul used this expression in this place, a phrase which is not usual with him. It is this: The Judaisers, who pursued the Apostle everywhere and persecuted him with an implacable hatred, taught that circumcision and all the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law must be observed, but they cared nothing for the mortification of the flesh or the subduing of the passions. They would have all the material luggage of the law, while they paid little or no heed to internal worship, to the life of the spirit and the subduing of the flesh. To these men St. Paul applied a strong and felicitous phrase, calling them "*the enemies of the cross of Christ.*" They were men, according to St. Paul, who shrank from suffering, who would not deny their baser passions, and who spurned and made war on the doctrine of Christ, symbolized and epitomized in the cross. My friends, how many of these same enemies of the cross of Christ have we among us? They are enemies of the cross of Christ, who, it may be, say long prayers, come to devotions, and assist at

Holy Mass; who believe all the teachings of the Church and call themselves Catholics; but who are unwilling to break off some sinful and wicked friendship, or to restore ill-gotten goods, or to make peace with one who has offended them, or who make usurious contracts, or are drunkards and quarrelsome, or are puffed up with pride and would, if they could, convert the very sweat of the toiler into gold, in their desire to enrich themselves. All these are enemies of the cross of Christ. Let them remember the words of the Apostle: *"They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences."*

And what will be the end of those enemies of the cross of Christ? St. Paul tells us: *"Whose end is destruction."* This is vigorous language, but there is no mistaking its meaning. If you flee from the cross of Christ, if you hate it, if you caress the flesh, your end will be eternal perdition. Here St. Paul, all aflame with noble indignation against the enemies of the cross, in which he gloried, and in which, he tells us elsewhere, he found all his wisdom, cries out in words full of energy: *"These men whose god is their belly."* In these burning words St. Paul unquestionably intended to scourge those, who, like irrational animals, gratify their appetites by eating and drinking to excess without any regard for the holy law of temperance, and who forgetful and reckless of every duty, sacrifice all to satisfy their gluttony: *"Whose God is their belly."* Great is man's love of money, greater still possibly is his love of honor and the esteem of men, and greatest of all is his love of life and health of body; still, to gratify

the cravings of his appetite, so great is the tyranny of this animal passion, he will squander his fortune, spurn honor and public esteem, sacrifice his health and shorten his life. It is more than an animal passion, for an animal left to itself will not eat more than what is necessary, and when its natural wants are satisfied, it is content and leaves off eating; whereas a man, when he is already satiated and drunk, still craves food and demands drink. St. Chrysostom is right when he says that frequently the belly, that is gluttony, does more damage than the sea, when it sweeps over the shore and inundates the adjacent lands.[1]

As you know, my friends, a slight transgression of the limits of Christian temperance is not a grave sin, but it is always so when such transgression, as often happens, is harmful to bodily health, destroys the reason and gives scandal; or when in consequence of it wife and children must go hungry, or there is danger of uttering blasphemy and obscene language and provoking quarrels. It is shameful that we men, who have been called to serve God, should serve the belly.

St. Paul adds another phrase to bring these enemies of Christ into fuller light: "*Whose glory,*" he says, "*is in their shame;*" which means that they boast of and glory in what should bring the blush of shame to the cheek; they boast of their feastings, their debauches, and their vices, the very thought of which should fill them with confusion. It is bad enough to give oneself up to any

[1] "Tanta mala non facit mare fines suos transgressum, quanta venter si corpus nostrum cum anima superaverit: omnem orbem alluit mare, et venter totum corpus" (In Gal.).

passion, no matter what, but to glory in being its slave and to triumph in the avowal of it is an intolerable depth of moral degradation; and some Christians go further and add to this infamy by shamelessly parading their vices and triumphing in their excesses, "*Whose glory,*" says St. Paul, "*is their shame.*"

And the Apostle goes on in his description, saying: "*Who mind earthly things.*" These men have a relish only for material things; speak to them of God, of a life to come, of virtue, of the joy of a good conscience, of the serene peace of one who is master of his passions, and they are annoyed and grow impatient and angry. They speak only of diversions and business, of banquets and balls and the pleasures of sense; they have lost all taste for the things of the soul and relish only the things of earth: "*Who mind earthly things.*" It would take a miracle of grace to bring these men, so sensual are they and carnal, back to the path that leads to heaven.

In contrast with the life of those men, who are enemies of the cross of Christ and slaves of their appetite, and who relish only the things of earth, St. Paul in a felicitous passage draws a picture of the life of true Christians. "*We are,*" he says, "*citizens of heaven,*" that is, we live here on earth as if we were already in heaven; "*our conversation is in heaven.*"[1] Those of whom I have been speaking to you have their thoughts and affections, their minds and hearts, constantly fixed on the miser-

[1]In Biblical phrase the words *ambulare,* or to walk, and *conversari,* to converse or to live, as in this passage, mean the same thing, that is, *to act, to conduct oneself, to control oneself, to live,* etc. It is a Hebrew idiom or form of speech.

able and perishable things of this lower world: "*Who mind earthly things;*" we, on the contrary, illuminated by faith, buoyed up by hope, and borne on by charity, raise our thoughts on high and live in heaven. How is this to be understood? It is an easy matter. We have a body and, as long as we live, it must dwell upon the earth. But in that body there is a soul that thinks and loves, and must think and love, as the body must breathe. Thought and love are the two enduring manifestations of our soul; they are the two wings by which it is borne aloft and takes flight going whither it wills. Where is the soul? It is where thought is and where it has fixed its affection. The body is ever upon the earth, but the soul goes hither and thither, as and where and when the mind and heart wish it to go. Take the astronomer; he is seated in his observatory, his body is there, he points his telescope and his soul journeys through the limitless spaces of heaven; it passes from star to star; it contemplates those stars, whose light, traveling at the rapidity of one hundred and eighty thousand miles a second, would require five, ten, or twelve years to reach this earth. The body is here but the soul is journeying through the boundless spaces of heaven at a rapidity greater than that of light. Again, take the Hebrew exile sitting by the banks of the Euphrates; his body is there, but his soul is wandering through the hills and streets of his beloved Jerusalem. And have not you, who listen to me, when in body far away from your native land and the home of your hearts, found your thoughts and affections straying away to the familiar hills and

valleys, and to the loved ones at home? The body abides in one place, the soul may live in another; and lives there where the object is of which it is thinking and which it is loving. Now, my dear friends, we must live with our bodies on this earth as long as it shall please God; but with the soul we may and should be there, where our true and abiding country is, where the saints are, where God, our Father, awaits us, and where we shall be for all eternity. When we lift up our mind and heart to God, when we hate vice and love virtue, when we pray and meditate on the eternal truths, when we spurn the things of earth and yearn after the things of heaven, then we live in heaven and are citizens of the heavenly kingdom: "*Our conversation is in heaven.*" What a happiness, my friends. Living such a life, the trials of earth, if felt at all, are lightly borne, and we have a foretaste of the delights which sate, without satiating, the elect.

Let us then, my friends, lift up on high our thoughts, affections, and desires. As the Church sings: *Lift up your hearts.* Let us begin here on this earth to live on high, where we shall live eternally, sending there ahead of us, as St. Augustine says, our first-fruits.

Let us follow the Apostle. Having exhorted us from this time forward to live in heaven, he goes on to another truth, which follows from this, as an effect from a cause. Let us live in heaven, "*whence,*" he says, "*we look for the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Jesus Christ risen and glorious reigns in heaven in the fulness of His divine majesty; He has gone before us and is

there on high as our head and pattern; from there He guides our steps by the light of faith and He strengthens our weakness by His grace; from there at the end of time He will come to crown our labors and fill the measure of our hopes.

How? *"He will reform the body of our lowness, made like the body of His glory."*[1] Rejoice and be glad, cries out St. Paul, as you look up to heaven; a day will come when Jesus Christ in His humanity, all radiant with light, will show Himself again in this world; and as the sun makes plants bud forth into leaf and flower, covers the earth with vernal beauty, and awakens nature to new life; so will Jesus Christ, coming in His humanity, luminous as the sun, the light and heat of divine life streaming out from it, raise our bodies from the dust, clothe them in a vesture of glory and fill them with fresh and immortal youth. How beautiful must have been the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, dazzling with light and glory, when the soul was united with it and it appeared to our blessed Mother and the apostles! Well, on that great day our bodies will be re-formed and made like the body of His glory, as St. Paul here says, and *"they will shine as the sun."* St. Bernard addressing his body, says: "Why do you complain? Why are you rebellious? Why do you war against the spirit? If the spirit humbles you, chastens you, subdues you, it does so for its good and yours. Reflect that He, who made you, will transform you."

[1]Qui reformabit *corpus humilitatis nostræ*, configuratum *corpori claritatis suæ*. The phrase, the body of our lowliness or humility, *made like the body of His glory* is thoroughly Hebraic, and means a most abject body, a most glorious body.

And how can Jesus transform our body? *"By the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."* That is, by using the same power by which He raised up His own body to life and by which in His own good time He will be Lord of all. Jesus Christ is man, but He is also God, and as God He can do all things, and, as by His word He drew forth the world out of nothing, so also by the same word He can still more easily recall our bodies to a new and a second life.

Keep these great truths of St. Paul in mind. Next, turning and addressing himself to his spiritual children, he says: *"Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."* In these most affectionate words we can feel the throbbing of an apostle's heart and of the heart of a father all tenderness for his children. St. Paul is really a wonderful man. Studying his life and reading his Letters we find him to be a true apostle, a man of iron and a martyr; his writings contain passages of marvelous vigor and irresistible eloquence, stern rebukes, and words of fire against the scandalous, against seducers and the corrupters of the truth; and then his style suddenly changes and becomes soft, insinuating, joyous, and winning, such as a father or a loving mother might write. Like all great men he was a man of extremes, and his language takes on all forms with wonderful ease and rapidity. In his desire to keep the Philippians firm in the Faith, which he had taught them, and in his eagerness to bind them to himself and through him to God, he calls them his joy, the

crown of his apostolate, and, as if unable to find other words to express the fulness of his heart, he calls them twice over, "*my dearly beloved.*" We can almost picture this man, now well on in years, worn with toil and suffering, loaded with chains in the depth of his prison at Rome, taking his beloved neophytes one by one to his heart and bathing them with his tears. One who loved his children so ardently, should, it would seem, be equally loved by them, and that he was so loved is shown by the fact that the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Rome to comfort him in his prison and to provide for his needs. The tender affection, which bound St. Paul to his children at Philippi and them to him, should be the model of that which ought to bind pastor to people and people to pastor.

Virtue is always gracious and beautiful, and the virtuous never forget the forms which cultured people use and require. St. Paul was most careful never to omit them in his Letters, which he always ends with most cordial messages and good wishes. "*I beg of Evodia and I beseech Syntyche.*" Evodia and Syntyche were possibly ladies of distinction of Philippi, and most likely converts of the Apostle, who, as we shall see, rendered great services to the cause of the Faith, how we know not, but most probably by defending it and giving material aid. St. Paul does not forget them, and since, as would appear, there was an estrangement between them, as may happen even among the good and virtuous, he tactfully adds: "*I beg them to be of one mind in the Lord,*" or to re-establish that peace and concord which

should exist among those who serve the Lord, who are followers of Jesus Christ and inspired by His spirit. Even if they disagree among themselves, when disagreement is lawful, they should never break the bonds of charity, but, on the contrary, should out of love for God have always but one heart.

Then referring directly to one, who must have been well known in Philippi and who had been his trusted companion in the apostolate, St. Paul continues: *"And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women,"* namely, Evodia and Syntyche, *"who have labored with me in the Gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers."* St. Paul, being an apostle, could certainly have given a command, but instead, he makes a request, teaching us that it is more in keeping with the Christian spirit, and more indicative of the kindly feeling and the humility so often and so urgently insisted on in the Gospel, to entreat rather than to command, even in the case of those constituted in authority.

St. Paul names Clement among his co-workers; he was likely the same Clement who subsequently occupied the Chair of St. Peter and who wrote two magnificent Letters to the Corinthians, thus continuing the pacific work of his master St. Paul.

"Whose names," says St. Paul, *"are written in the book of life."* Certainly no one fancies that God keeps a book of life and death, in which are written the names of the elect and the reprobate. Of such God, who sees all and knows all perfectly, has no need; it is a form of speech which we use in speaking of God. God's book is His infinite

knowledge, which embraces all things in heaven and on earth and from which nothing escapes. God knows those who love and serve Him; they are called to eternal life, and hence they are said to be written in the book of life. My friends, let us live so that our names may be written in this book of life, the life which we yearn for; and the book, in which are inscribed our good works, is written by each of us, and from it nothing can be erased. It will be a witness for or against us, during all the never-ending ages.

HOMILY XXII

At that time: As He was speaking these things unto them, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored Him saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with His disciples. And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, He said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth He went in: and took her by the hand. And the maid

arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.—Gospel, *Matt.* ix. 18-26.

If you have attentively listened to the reading of the Gospel, you have learned that it gives the story of two facts, or rather of two miracles, the healing of a woman troubled for twelve years with an issue of blood, and the recalling to life of a young girl just dead. The two events followed immediately one after the other and took place at Capharnaum, during the first period of Jesus' preaching in Galilee.

These two miracles are narrated by St. Matthew, and also by St. Mark and St. Luke,[1] and while of course the account is substantially the same in all three, there are some differences in detail which should be noted. The briefest account is that of St. Matthew. St. Mark and St. Luke give some particulars that are not without interest. In my explanation I shall follow the story as given by St. Matthew, but I shall supply his omissions, as they occur, from the more detailed narratives of St. Mark and St. Luke.

Jesus had healed the man stricken with palsy and called Matthew to follow Him; He sat down at meat with Matthew, and among the guests were many Publicans, at which the Pharisees as usual were greatly scandalized. Jesus was replying to their censures and "*as He was speaking a certain ruler* (from Capharnaum) *came up and adored Him.*" Matthew does not say who he was or what office he held, but these particulars are supplied by St. Mark and St. Luke, who tell us that

[1]Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 8-41.

his name was Jairus, meaning brilliant, and that he was a ruler of the Synagogue, an office to which was attached the duty of presiding at the assemblies gathered there.[1]

Jairus coming fell at the feet of Jesus, as St. Mark says, and as St. Matthew adds, adored Him, that is, cast himself before Him in an attitude of entreaty. Did he believe Jesus to be the Man-God and as such adored Him? That is not likely. The report current concerning Our Lord would lead Jairus to believe Him to be a prophet or a saint, or a worker of miracles, or possibly even the Messias, but he had not and could not have any accurate knowledge of whom He was, any more than did the apostles at that time. Why, then, did he adore Jesus? Adoration, you say, is due only to God. Certainly, the *adoration,* which is the highest expression of worship, is given to God alone, but in Holy Writ we find this word often used to signify a high honor paid to distinguished persons. Thus we read that Esther *adored* Assuerus, and Abraham *adored* the angels, who were his guests; and surely Esther had no thought of *adoring* Assuerus, nor had Abraham any thought of *adoring* the angels, as they would have adored God. Among the Hebrews and the Orientals generally it is the custom to fall upon the ground and touch the forehead to the earth on coming into the presence of great personages, and this is likely what

[1]The law explained in the Synagogue was the religious, the civil, and criminal law; this to them was everything, for among Hebrews and still among many Eastern peoples, religion and the civil code are one and the same thing. Such is even in our own day the social constitution of the Mussulmans. The Koran is both a religious and a civil code.

Jairus did. Would to God that our Christians, who believe in Jesus Christ, the God-Man, would, on coming into church, honor Him and reverence Him in the Divine Sacrament with half the honor and reverence paid to Him by Jairus.

When the ruler of the Synagogue, who was doubtless a Pharisee,[1] had offered his homage to Jesus, he at once made known the object of his coming, and here I shall supply the omissions of the briefer story of St. Matthew from the narrative of St. Mark and St. Luke. The ruler said: *"My daughter is at the point of death; come, lay Thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live."* This man had faith, but it was an imperfect faith, and far less strong than that of the centurion. He believed that Jesus could cure His daughter, although she was at the point of death, but he believed that it was necessary for him to be at her side, to pray over her, and to lay hands upon her. Had he had perfect faith in Jesus, he would have said: *"Only a word from Thee, and my daughter will be safe."* Still, Jesus did not reprove him. He said nothing, knowing that the miracle he was about to perform would give light to the distressed father. Here St. Luke tells us an interesting particular concerning the daughter of Jairus, namely that she was his only daughter and was twelve years of age.

Jesus was deeply touched in listening to the entreaty of the disconsolate father, and at once

[1] I have said elsewhere that among the Pharisees there was an occasional good one, such as Nicodemus, Gamaliel, Paul, and others, and such also must have been this ruler of the Synagogue; and it may be that love of his daughter and the hope of saving her made him forget that he was a Pharisee.

rising followed him, and so also did His disciples, as St. Matthew notes, and St. Mark and St. Luke add that a great multitude gathered about Him as He went along. When any one begs a favor of us, and begs it passionately with tears in his voice, if we can grant it, and thus comfort the petitioner, if we have any heart at all, we will not refuse him, nay it will be a joy to us to gratify his desire; think you, then, that Jesus, who was all goodness and tenderness, could send away this poor disconsolate father, who had fallen at his feet begging for the life of his daughter? Search the pages of the four Gospels and you will not find a single instance in which Jesus sent away with a refusal those who came to ask a favor of Him. There is but one single exception that I can call to mind, and that was when the Pharisees asked of Him a sign from heaven, and this He denied them because they were proud, unreasonable, and obstinately refused to believe in His miracles.

Let us follow Jesus as He goes forth from the house in which He was sitting and teaching, and sets out on His way to the home of Jairus, not far away in Capharnaum.

We can all fancy the commotion and excitement of the people when the word was spread abroad that Jesus was going to the house of Jairus to heal his dying daughter. They were questioning and answering one another, pushing and crowding about Jesus, each trying to get near Him to witness the miracle which they hoped He would perform. While Jesus was going along, urged on and almost carried forward by the throng, "*A woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve*

years, came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed." Here St. Mark and St. Luke give a detail, omitted by St. Matthew, namely, that the woman had been a sufferer for twelve years, that she had called in many physicians, had spent all she had on them and the medicines they prescribed, and was no better, rather worse in consequence. The Gospel tells us no more of this woman, it gives neither her name nor her country, nor does it say how she came to be there. The unfortunate woman, destitute and suffering, had, like so many others, heard of Jesus and the miracles He had wrought, and she felt springing up in her heart a hope that she might be cured. She said to herself, "If I can but touch only the hem of His garment I shall be healed." See the difference between the poor woman, who was probably illiterate and had had no schooling, and Jairus, the ruler of the Synagogue, and therefore a man of education. Jairus thought that Jesus could not heal his daughter unless He went to her bedside, put His hand upon her head, and prayed for her; this woman, on the contrary, believed without doubting that Jesus could instantly heal her infirmity by the sole touch of His garment, without even being asked to do so, and without uttering a single word. The faith of this woman is incomparably superior to that of Jairus, and here again we have a striking example of the fact that the rude and uncultured of the lower class frequently outstrip the learned of the world in the path of virtue.

And why did not this woman go openly to Jesus,

speak out, and ask to be healed, as so many others had done? Why did she wish to have a miracle wrought in her behalf stealthily and by stratagem? She was likely a stranger in Capharnaum, and shrunk from publicly asking to be healed in the presence of that multitude. Then, too, as the narrative implies, she had a very great reverence for Jesus; and, again, the infirmity from which she suffered made her unclean, according to the Law, and made those unclean who touched her; and so, filled with shame but strong in faith, she made her way through that surging crowd and stealthily drew near to Jesus, confident that if she could but touch that strip of cloth, which bordered the mantle of the Hebrews, she would be cured.

A question naturally arises here: If this woman had such unlimited faith in the power and goodness of Jesus, why did it not lead her to believe that she might obtain her cure by praying secretly to Him in her heart? Why did her faith make the certainty of the miracle depend on the physical touch of the garment of Jesus? Could He not have wrought the miracle without the physical touch? Certainly, who can doubt it? But if the poor woman had secretly in her heart asked that the miracle be performed without any external act, and Jesus had granted her request, who would have known of the miracle? What proof could be had of it? In order that the miracle might be known and its certainty established, an external act on the part of the woman was required, to which Jesus Christ by His power would give an immediate response. Moreover, we are so constituted that when we think, or desire, or ask any-

thing, we make it known outwardly by word or act; it is a necessity of our nature. If I meet a friend who has been absent for many years, I greet him and embrace him; if I meet a distinguished person on the street I lift my hat and bow; the beggar who asks an alms puts out his hand entreatingly; and thus we all experience the necessity of revealing by some outward physical act what we feel and think. This poor woman had the most lively faith in Jesus Christ and in His power, and she manifested it by touching the hem of His garment. Such living faith must have its reward, and it had. In that very instant, says St. Mark, "*she felt in her body that she was healed.*" How was the cure effected? Was there latent in the hem of the garment a healing virtue, like the electricity in a voltaic pile? No, assuredly not. The grace of healing that cured the woman did not reside in the garment but in him who wore it, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He who sees all, who read the heart of that poor woman, who heard the moaning of her soul, at the very instant when His garment was touched healed her by His omnipotent power.

There are those who think themselves learned and who affect surprise and tax with superstition people of strong, simple faith, who kiss the crucifix and relics of saints and press them to their hearts. Let them not think that these people believe that any specific virtue resides in the crucifix or in a relic; if they did so believe they would be guilty of superstition. They kiss the crucifix, and honor relics, because in doing so they intend to kiss the cross on which Jesus died and to kiss Jesus Christ

Himself, and to honor and reverence those saints of whom the blessed relics are the memorials. And do we not religiously preserve the memorials of loved dead ones; do we not put their portraits in a prominent place; and do we not honor, reverence them, and kiss them? Do we think in doing so that the hearts of our dead friends still beat and live in those portraits? No; but our hearts go out to them, and in looking upon, touching, and kissing those memorials, our souls are mysteriously united with those who were and are still dear to us. In those acts of devout souls, who kiss and kiss again the cross, relics of the saints, and other objects of devotion, there is not a shadow of superstition, as some think there is, but only an outward manifestation of strong and living faith.

And here let us make another remark. The woman touched the garment of Our Lord and was healed by the touch, and we not only touch, but receive within ourselves the adorable body of Jesus Christ and are intimately united to Him, and how is it that we do not feel ourselves healed of our spiritual infirmities and filled with that divine life, of which He is the perennial fountain?

The woman after being cured by that marvelous touch, withdrew joyful, thinking that she would remain unobserved, but Jesus knowing that virtue had gone out from Him, that is, in the miracle He had wrought,[1] turning to the multitude, said: *"Who hath touched my garment?"* Certainly we can not for a moment suppose that Jesus did not

[1]We should not imagine that any *material* healing force went out from Jesus, as heat goes out from red hot iron. The expression is used only to indicate the effect produced by Jesus.

know who touched Him, or that it was necessary for any one to tell Him who it was, or to point out the woman who was healed; His purpose in asking the question was solely to make known to the multitude the miracle and the faith of the woman.

St. Luke here notes a very important circumstance, saying: "*Peter and they that were with him said: Master, the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say: Who touched Me?*" From this we learn, that while on His way to the house of Jairus, Jesus was hemmed in by the crowd. But how did it happen that while so many thronged about Him and pressed against Him, only the woman, who with her finger touched the edge of His garment, received the gift of healing and was cured of a serious and hopeless malady? Her touch was the touch of faith and obtained what she desired; they, being only curious, or having only a faltering faith, experienced no beneficial effects from touching Him. The same happens to us. How many touch Our Lord Jesus Christ and even receive Him into their souls; and of those why do some increase in all virtue, while others remain just what they were before, and, it may be, grow more indifferent or worse? The reason is, the former receive Him with faith, the latter with indifference, and Jesus deals with each as each deals with Him in preparing to receive Him.

My friends, St. Cyprian assures us that Jesus gives His gifts in the measure in which He finds the soul prepared to receive them, just as the sun illuminates bodies that of their nature are capable

of receiving its light. Let us prepare well to receive Him and then we shall receive Him well, as did the woman in the Gospel.

When Jesus uttered these words He very naturally stopped and simultaneously the crowd that pressed about Him also halted, and, seeing that He was about to speak, they were silent, wondering what He would say. His words were of course heard by the poor woman, who seeing herself forced to confess what she had done, blushing came forward and in fear and trembling fell at the feet of Jesus, possibly expecting to be rebuked, and declared before all the people why she had touched Him and how she had been healed by the touch;[1] at the same time, as we may well believe, asking His pardon and thanking Him as best she knew how. Jesus looking upon her said: "*Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go thy way in peace.*" What sweetness and goodness are contained in these words of the Saviour, which I have explained to you elsewhere and with which you are familiar.

St. Mark and St. Luke say that when Jairus presented himself to Jesus his daughter was dying; but in the meantime she had died, and at the very moment when Jesus was praising so highly the faith of the woman just restored to health, there came a messenger to the father, who was standing at the side of Jesus, bearing the sad news of his daughter's death, saying: "*Thy daughter is dead; why dost thou trouble the Master any further?*" Which meant: All is now over, there is no further hope of saving the girl, and what can

[1]Luke viii. 45-48.

the Master do now? You see how weak was the faith of these people; it would seem that they regarded Him as a great physician, or a man of still greater powers, capable indeed of restoring the sick to health, but utterly unable to call back the dead to life. Jesus hearing the words the messenger, who was probably a servant, had addressed to Jairus, turned to him and said confidently: "*Fear not, believe only and she shall be safe.*" These words of the Saviour, reinforced by the miracle wrought upon the woman, comforted the father and invigorated his faith. Here again Jesus attributes everything to faith, as if by it we in some way force the hand of God; and the reason is because by a living, unshaken faith, we give the greatest possible honor to God, to His power, His goodness, and His fidelity in keeping His promises.[1]

St. Matthew, desiring to be brief, omitted the facts just narrated, which are given in almost the same words by both St. Mark and St. Luke; and now we will go back to St. Matthew's narrative. The three evangelists relate the same story. St. Matthew says: "*When Jesus was now come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels mak-*

[1]Renan says that Jesus did not work, nor did He believe that He could work, miracles. The people in their enthusiasm attributed miracles to Him. According to Renan the miracles were the creation of the faith of the people. They imagined that He could do miracles, and then they believed that He did them. What a lovely thing such a faith is! To imagine that you see one risen from the dead, and there he is living and risen! This is neither faith nor imagination; it is insanity, the insanity of a whole people. And to think of explaining in this way the miracles of Christ! And then to remember that such reasoners fancy themselves to be great men, sublime and incomparable philosophers!

ing a rout, He said: Give place; for the girl is not dead but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn.'' To understand what is here narrated, we should know of a custom, common among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, and prevailing among some peoples of our own day on the occasion of the death of any one, and especially of one of the upper class. Immediately after death men and particularly women, paid for the service, gathered at the house of the dead, and, with hair dishevelled and in loose, flowing garments, kept themselves in incessant motion, tossing their arms about and beating their hands, weeping, lamenting, and shouting, and all the while recounting the virtues of the departed; and to all this was added the noise of trumpets and playing of other musical instruments, the whole making a weird and deafening noise. Profane historians, poets, and the prophets bear indubitable testimony to this custom.[1]

The girl had scarcely expired when the house was filled with this class of people, and they were all the more numerous and noisy because her family was one of wealth and distinction. Jesus, on seeing the crowd, seemed a little annoyed and said: *''Give place,''* or withdraw. Jesus did not like noise and racket; they distract the mind and destroy peace; He liked quiet and recollection, and we frequently see Him quitting the multitude and withdrawing into solitary spots to rest and pray.

Then Jesus added: *''The girl is not dead, but sleepeth.''* The girl was really dead, how then could Jesus say: *''She is not dead, but sleepeth''*?

[1]See Jeremias, ix. 17.

Those who believe in a future life know that death is but a sleep; we go to sleep here below on the earth in the evening, and we wake up at the dawn of eternity in heaven; the dead in Scripture language sleep and await the voice of God, who will call them to a second life. Jesus said that the girl was sleeping, because that death, although real, was not to last, and would soon be followed by a return to life, and because He could call her back to life as easily as one wakes another from sleep.[1] It was also said of Lazarus that he was sleeping.

Hearing these words the bystanders began to smile ironically, *"and laughed Him to scorn."* They were quite sure the girl was dead, and thinking it impossible to call her back to life they derided Him, as they might one who had been jesting with them, pleased that he had made such silly fools of them, and forthwith denied what He said. The world, my friends, is ever the same; it scoffs at what it can not understand; it had borne Jesus in triumph to the very threshold of Jairus' home; a little way back on the road it had heard one of His miracles proclaimed by her upon whom it had been wrought; and now they scorn Him with derision and contempt. Let us neither fear nor heed

[1]Among the difficulties advanced by unbelievers against the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ in raising the dead to life is this: "Where were their souls while they were dead? How is it that they have told us nothing of the world beyond?" What good would it do to know this? God, foreseeing the resurrection of these souls, held them in a state of suspense or quiescence. "They have told us nothing." It may be that they did. What do we know about it? And had they reported anything, these same men would have said: "There is the proof that they were not dead; they were only dreaming." These unbelievers are an odd lot and hard to please.

it, and in so doing we shall follow the example of our divine Master. *"And when the multitude was put forth He went in."* It was not becoming that these scoffers should witness the miracle, or disturb the peace of the house with their noisy clamor. Here St. Mark's narrative is more detailed than either that of St. Matthew or St. Luke and we will follow it.

"And He admitted not any man to follow Him, but Peter, and James, and John the brother of James . . . and the father and the mother of the damsel, . . . and He entered in where she was lying." As these three beloved disciples were to be the witnesses of His transfiguration and of His agony in the Garden, so Jesus wished that they should also witness this, His first raising of the dead to life, in the person of this young girl, and naturally the father and mother of the girl were granted the same privilege. Possibly also the room was so small that it would not accommodate any more; still there were witnesses in plenty to attest the fact and all particulars referring to it. Moreover, as it is hardly becoming to ask the reason for everything a person in authority does, so would it be an impertinence to wish to know why Jesus wanted only those five to witness the miracle.

The young girl was likely lying on the bed, on which she had expired a little while before; her hair dressed, her hands folded, strewn it may be with flowers, and her face pale; she lay there as one wearied and resting. The moment was a solemn one, the stillness was absolute, the parents trembling in anticipation kept their weeping eyes

on the divine Master. He draws near the girl, takes her hand and in the language of the country says: *Talitha, cumi,* or "Damsel, arise."[1] At the sound of these omnipotent words the girl opened her eyes and looked about her, as one waking from sleep; the current of life leaped through her frame, the color came into her cheeks, a smile played upon her lips just now so livid; she seized the hand of Jesus, rose and sat up in bed, dressed herself, sprang to her feet, and walked. *"And immediately the damsel rose up and walked."* It would be impossible to put into words the tumultuous feelings of that father and mother, their surprise, joy, tears, and thanks; I leave you to imagine what their feelings were. As a proof that the girl was really called back from death to life and was perfectly well, Jesus at once *"commanded that something should be given her to eat."* I shall not stop to prove the certainty of the miracle; it needs no proof. The girl was dead; Jesus was not present when she died; she was but twelve years of age; she could not have been an accomplice in any fraud; the news of her death was spread abroad; Jesus was derided for saying that she was sleeping; there were five present who witnessed her return to life, and we may say in a sense that the whole multitude gathered there were all witnesses of the same fact; Jesus used no remedy; He called out to the girl, using only two words, and she not only rose up but was in perfect health. *"And the fame of this*

[1]At the time of Christ the Aramaic dialect, a mixture of Syriac, Chaldaic, and Hebrew was spoken. Jesus said: *Talitha cumi;* St. Mark alone records these words which, translated, mean: Damsel, arise.

fact," says St. Matthew, *"went abroad into all that country."*

My dear friends, Jesus, besought by the parents of that girl, who at first was dangerously ill and then died, went at once and by His touch and word filled that cold corpse with fresh, warm life. How many here and elsewhere are sick of soul, how many dead! My God, what a saddening sight! Jesus alone can heal them, He alone can call them back to life. But how can Jesus go to them? He will go when He is besought, besought as He was by Jairus, when He went to raise this man's daughter. Let parents pray for their children who are spiritually sick, spiritually dead. Let priests, pastors of souls, pray to Him, let all pray to Him, who love the souls of their brethren, and Jesus will renew in them the miracles of His omnipotent power.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

The Sixth after Epiphany[1]

HOMILY XXIII

BRETHREN: We give thanks to God always for you all, making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing. Being mindful of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of Our Lord Jesus Christ before God and our Father: Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election: For our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes. And you became followers of us, and of the Lord, receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that you were made a pattern to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but also in every place, your faith which is toward God, is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves relate of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised up from the dead.—EPISTLE, 1 *Thess.* i. 2-10.

IN THE order of time this Letter of St. Paul to the faithful of Thessalonica, one of the capitals of Macedonia, is the first of the fourteen written

[1]According to the liturgical order there must be thirteen Sun-

by him. The Apostle had in a short space of time founded there a numerous and flourishing Church,[1] composed mostly of Gentiles; then being forced to leave there because of the persecutions of the Hebrews, he went first to Berea, then to Athens, and finally to Corinth. From Corinth he sent Timothy to Thessalonica, and having received from him a good account of that Church, he wrote this Letter, in the fifty-third or fifty-fourth year of our era. Its subject is almost wholly moral, and the sentences read for you, which form the first chapter, are an affectionate outburst of the heart of a father, expressing unmeasured praise for the faith of his children. And now we shall explain them.

This first Letter to the Thessalonians, like so many others of the Letters of St. Paul, was written both in his own name and in that of his companions and co-workers in his toilsome apostolate. Those here mentioned are Sylvanus or Silas and Timothy, and hence we are not surprised that he writes in the name of all, and begins, as is his custom, by sending them his best wishes and congratulations. He says: "*We give thanks to God always for you all.*" Whatever good man does in any condition of life is done with God's aid; without this he could do nothing; it was, then, but right that St. Paul should give thanks to God for any good accomplished among the Thessalonians, God

days in each season; but Easter, which regulates the movable feasts, varies each year. To put thirteen Sundays in each season recourse has to be had to the six Sundays after Epiphany. Of these six, I have put only five there, the sixth I have put here. Every one can year by year arrange these Sundays according to calendar.

[1]Acts xvii.

being its primary and chief cause. It is true this good belonged wholly to the Thessalonians, but true charity leads us to regard the good done by others as our own; and hence we should give God thanks, as well for the good we see in others, as for our own, charity making all things common. Reason, and still more the instinct of faith, teaches us that in all things, in all the happenings of life, we should lift our thoughts above this earth and fix them upon Him who is the Supreme Ruler and fountain of every blessing, and thank Him for His gifts, which He is constantly lavishing upon us. This is why St. Paul begins his Letter by saying: "*We give thanks to God for you all.*" He excepts none and makes no limitation of time: "*Always and for you all.*"

And St. Paul not only gives thanks to God for his spiritual children in his own name and in that of his companions in toil, but he declares that "*he makes a remembrance of them in his prayers without ceasing.*" It is an instinct of charity to obtain for others the same blessings we ourselves enjoy, for it is impossible to form an idea of a charity which is inoperative. But you will say: "I can do nothing for my friends; I am poor and ignorant, and they are numerous and far away; some of them I do not even know by name; what good, think you, can I possibly do for them?" You can do much good for them, and you can do it every day of your lives. But how? Very easily. Can you not offer your prayers for them to God, your heavenly Father and theirs? Very well then; pray to Him for yourself and for them; pray for all, whether believers or unbelievers, for good and

bad, and you will do them the greatest favor within your power, do what the Apostle did in keeping always in his thoughts his poor neophytes of Thessalonica. Prayer, when offered up for one another by all, binds all together in the bonds of charity, makes us all brothers, and goes up to God as the most acceptable of services. The aid we mutually give in prayer is also the easiest and the most efficacious service we can do one another here on this earth.

St. Paul, while thanking God and praying for the Thessalonians, tells us why they were so dear to him. And why? First of all because he was "*mindful of their faith.*" As I have often told you, faith, that is the knowledge of God and of the truths revealed by Him, which we believe with unhesitating certainty, is the foundation of the life of a Christian. But what is the knowledge of truth worth without the works of truth? It is worth no more than a foundation without a superstructure, than a seed without fruit, than a plan without a house. Works are the complement of faith, and hence St. Paul, in praising the Thessalonians, says that he has a vivid memory "*of their faith and labor,*" that is, their lives were in keeping with their faith.

My friends, the faith of the Thessalonians is ours also, but can we say that our lives are, as were theirs, conformable to it? If St. Paul could come among us and be a witness of our daily lives, could he say of us: I see your faith and works? I know not; let each of you interrogate his conscience. What I see is that many Christians live as if they were not Christians; and if they were

in the midst of Pagans, judging from their conduct, it would be difficult to distinguish them from their heathen neighbors. They are Christians because they are baptized and because they profess to be; but their lives, alas, are not the lives of Christians! What a contrast between their profession and their conduct; what a contradiction, what a rebuke to the Christian name; what an argument for the blasphemer of our holy religion! To call oneself a Christian, and to live as a Pagan!

Faith, says St. Paul elsewhere, is first; then hope, and then charity, and the greatest of all, and the crown of the others, is charity. These three virtues, because their immediate object is God, are called theological virtues, and without them it is not possible to be saved. Here St. Paul enumerates these virtues, slightly changing the order, saying: "*Mindful of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope.*" That is, mindful of your *toilsome* faith, of your *laborious* charity, and of your *enduring* hope.[1] I think St. Paul calls the charity of the Thessalonians *laborious* and their hope *enduring,* because they must have had to bear up under many trials and to suffer much for the Faith, although we know not what these trials and sufferings were. In those early days, in the very beginnings of the Church, the most cruel sufferings and the most ferocious persecutions were of almost daily occurrence; they were pursued by the

[1]These expressions of St. Paul are discordant and involved both in the Vulgate and in the Greek text; it is evident that a Hebrew is trying to speak Greek and to put his thoughts into form. The translation I have given expresses as well as possible the idea intended to be conveyed.

Hebrews, who were their bitterest enemies; and then by the Pagans, who, having the law behind them and the influence of their heathen traditions, gave no peace to the followers of Christ, harassing them and persecuting them in every conceivable way. They could find the necessary strength to courageously bear up against these ferocious assaults nowhere except in faith and hope and charity, a triple bond that binds us to God and makes us strong with His strength.

We, too, my friends, are daily confronted with the trials of a Christian life; they may not be so severe as those to which the first Christians were exposed, but they are frequently painful enough and lasting, and many of our brethren go down before them. Would we overcome them and secure the victory? Let us lift up our minds to God in faith, and lift up our hearts and aspirations in hope and charity, and keep ourselves firmly united to Him, and we can not fail of victory. I have often seen a vessel secured with a strong cable to a large stone pillar set in the ground upon the shore; the winds drove it furiously here and there and every instant it would seem that it must be swamped and go to pieces; but little by little the storm abated, the waves subsided, and the vessel was uninjured, still lashed to the pillar and lying at rest upon the waters. This is an image of our soul when it is firmly bound to God with the triple cord of faith, hope and charity. As long as we are bound to God with this triple cord we need not fear; shipwreck is impossible.

It is as if St. Paul had said: "Calling to mind, nay seeing these trials, these works of your faith,

of your charity, and of your hope, I confidently conclude that you are chosen of God, that you are in His grace and that you are dear to Him: *Knowing brethren, beloved of God, your election.*" When we see a tree bear up against the fury of the wind, we say that its roots are sound and deep down and its trunk strong; and so also, the Apostle, knowing the firm faith of the Thessalonians and seeing the works their charity had accomplished, concluded with absolute certainty that their election was secure and that their hearts were inundated with divine grace, for the good tree is known by the abundance of its fruit.

The Apostle goes on still further developing the same idea. "*For our Gospel,*" he says, "*hath not been to you in word only but in power also and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes.*" You have good reason, St. Paul seems to say, for remaining firm in the Faith which I taught you, because the proofs which I gave you of its truth and divine origin were not in words only; you were also witnesses of the miracles which God wrought to confirm it and of the wonderful, the full, and superabundant diffusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; proofs which it pleased God to work through me and for your benefit.

St. Thomas well says that man would not believe the truths of faith did he not see that it is his duty to do so. And were this not true, the faith of those who have come to the full use of reason would not be a reasonable faith. Those outside the Church can not enter her portals except by following the

light of reason, which makes manifest to them her divine origin, and hence the Fathers say that reason is a schoolmaster who points out the way to faith. It is hardly necessary to add that divine grace works in the soul, anticipating and sustaining our own efforts.

Now, how can man know that it is his duty to believe the truths taught by faith? Is it because the light of reason teaches him that they, like natural truths, are in themselves undeniable? No; for even if they were all truths of the natural order, all men would not be capable of understanding them, and a great many of them are supernatural truths and hence wholly beyond the powers of our natural reason. How, then, can we know that it is our duty to accept them? A man presents himself to you, teaches you a doctrine you do not understand, and assures you that what he says is true; you know the man; you know that he is honest, that he is learned, and there is not the least possibility of suspecting either that he can deceive you or has any intention of doing so. Again, a general on the field of battle receives a written order, commanding him to make a certain movement, the wisdom of which he does not see; nay, it appears to him wholly unreasonable. The general examines the written order, recognizes the signature of his superior officer, and without hesitating an instant obeys. Do you, in accepting the doctrine you do not understand, and does the general, in obeying the order, which to him seems inexplicable, act contrary to reason? No; on the contrary, you act reasonably, because reason requires that you should submit to the judgment of

one, who you know is worthy of the fullest confidence. You do not understand the matter itself, but you do understand that it comes to you through the intellect of one who, you know, does understand it.

This is our case, and it was the case of the Thessalonians. They indeed could not understand all the truths that St. Paul taught them, but they saw that he was disinterested and wholly consumed with the love of truth; that he preached a doctrine from which he could reap no material gain; which demanded of him all sorts of sacrifices, and which exposed his life to danger; they heard him state that he had seen the risen Christ; they saw him work great miracles, miracles beyond all question, in their presence, in confirmation of the doctrines he taught; they saw that he was a pattern of every virtue, and seeing and hearing all this, how could they question or doubt his teaching? It was reasonable for them to believe everything he taught, and it is also reasonable for us to believe the same teachings, since we have all the proofs the early Christians had, proofs that are strengthened, rather than weakened, by the lapse of time, and the additional force and evidence which lapse of time gives.

St. Paul goes on praising and congratulating the Thessalonians, saying: "*And you became followers of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost.*" You, O Thessalonians, have imitated me and my companions and co-workers in the apostolic ministry. Imitated us! I should rather say that you have imitated Our Lord Jesus Christ. And how?

Receiving the truth preached by us, and receiving it amid many and great tribulations. From this it is clear that the Thessalonians were obliged to suffer much, to endure "*much tribulation*" for the faith which they embraced. But like true disciples of St. Paul and of Jesus Christ, in the midst of their trials and sufferings for the Faith, they were inundated "*with the joy of the Holy Ghost.*" What an example of faith and strength of character those early Christians give us! Harassed, tormented, and persecuted, spoken ill of and worse, they never yielded, and instead of complaining and giving up the fight, they rejoiced and exulted. This, says St. Chrysostom, is characteristic of those who are made superior to nature and who are scarcely conscious of their sorrows, being like unto Jesus Christ, who rejoiced while He was being scourged and spit upon and nailed to the cross; He suffered pain of body, but rejoiced in spirit. It is not the nature of sorrow to give joy, but joy comes from the consciousness of suffering for Christ and from the thought that, by the aid of divine grace, we pass through the fire of affliction to eternal rest.[1]

Such, says St. Paul, still praising the Thessalonians, such has been your bearing "*that you were made a pattern to all that believe in Mace-*

[1]"Hoc vero eorum est, qui jam humanam naturam transcenderunt, corpusque habent quasi passionibus non obnoxium. Sic et Christus, quamvis multas afflictiones pretulerit, gavisus tamen est . . . Nostri gratia seipsum exinanivit, conspuendus, alapis percutiendus et crucifigendus . . . Afflictio in corporalibus, gaudium in spiritualibus . . . Non enim natura afflictionum hoc habet, ut gaudium pariant, sed istud ex ea afflictione est, quæ propter Christum toleratur, et ex spiritu irrorante, et per caminum tentationum in requiem constituente . . . " (In Joan. xvii. 1).

donia and Achaia." "You Thessalonians," he says, "being imitators of us as we are imitators of Christ, have the honor and glory of being patterns, not only to the believers of Macedonia, but of all Greece." Nothing finer could be said in praise of the Christians of that age. And as each Christian should so live that his conduct will be a pattern to his brethren, so should each family and each parish. My friends, are we such that we could be a pattern to others? Are our families such, and our parishes? Have we not, on the contrary, reason to blush? Let every one of us give his own answer.

So luminous was the example of the Thessalonians throughout Macedonia and all Greece that St. Paul openly affirms: "*From you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but also in every place your faith, which is toward God, is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything.*" These words mean that the fame of the Gospel preached by St. Paul to the Thessalonians, had, through their labors, become well known in the neighboring parts of Macedonia, and in Achaia or Greece, and had spread everywhere; and not only had their conversion become known in all the adjacent countries, but their faith, illustrated by the holiness of their lives, had been so thoroughly diffused among them that it was not necessary for St. Paul to make it known to them. The Thessalonians had professed their faith so openly and courageously and had lived so irreproachably, thus at once making known their faith and doing it honor, that they exercised a sort of apostolic ministry in those

nearby countries and almost relieved St. Paul of the necessity of preaching it there. They spread the news everywhere of the coming of the Apostle among them, and of how they had left off the worship of idols and given themselves to the service of the true and living God. *"The living and true God"* is here used by way of contrast and in opposition to the Pagan gods or idols, which were neither living nor true gods, but the creations of ignorance and imposture. Here, again, is an instance of the power of example; it is a most eloquent sermon and almost equals the preaching of the Apostle himself, for he says: *"We need not speak anything."* That is: "When your conversion is known and your faith, words of mine are needless."

Through you, St. Paul says, addressing the Thessalonians, the neighboring countries have learned to turn their backs upon idols and to serve the true God; and not only this, but they have also learned through us *"to wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom He raised up from the dead."* It is common with St. Paul, even in expressing greetings and congratulations, to condense in a single sentence the most important truths, and the words just quoted are an example of this. In speaking of the conversion of the Thessalonians from Paganism to the true God, he abruptly passes on to the end of all things, that is, to the coming of Christ as Judge, and to the last judgment, which awaits us all. And this is one of the chief truths of our faith, which, if it were more frequently called to mind, would rouse us to shake off our sloth, fill us with a holy fear, and make

us more solicitous in the discharge of our duties. The man who frequently thinks of the account he must give to God of his whole life and of the irrevocable judgment to follow, can not help feeling himself strongly impelled to live as a Christian. Lift up your minds and hearts, St. Paul seems to say, raise your thoughts on high. Remember well that on that great and solemn day you must give an account of your words and works, your thoughts and affections, to that Jesus whom I have preached to you, who came to free us from sin, and therefore from the punishment which is the accompaniment of sin, from His anger, and from eternal damnation.

HOMILY XXIV

At that time Jesus said to the multitude: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: Which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable He spoke to them. The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes; and without parables He did not speak to them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.—Gospel, *Matt.* xiii. 31-35.

WHEN it became known that Herod had cast John, the Precursor, into prison, Jesus left Jerusalem and Judea, whither He had gone to celebrate the feast of the Tabernacles, and where His life and His preaching had given Him name and reputation. He went thence into His own Galilee, going from village to village and from city to city, preaching the kingdom of heaven, as He called it, or the Gospel and the fulfilment of the promises made through the prophets. During this period of His preaching He spoke many parables, suggested by the nature of the country in which He was or by the peculiarities of the people to whom He was preaching. He was in Galilee, called by Pliny the garden of wheat, and lying in part along the shores of Lake Genesareth or Tiberias, famous for its fish. This will explain why He spoke the two parables, the one of the good seed and the cockle, and the other of the casting of the net into the lake and the separation of the good fish from the worthless. To this period belong also the two parables you have just heard and which I am about to explain. It is true they are distinct, but their meaning is the same, and the scope of both is to show the spread and the efficacy of the Gospel teaching, or of the Church, the kingdom of Christ. And now let us go on to the explanation of these two parables.

Jesus spoke the parable of the good seed, in the midst of which an enemy had sown cockle, and to show that this good seed, or the faithful, would become a large multitude, He went on to recite another parable, saying: "*The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man*

took and sowed in his field.'' Some think that the words *''kingdom of heaven''* in this passage signify Jesus Christ Himself, but this can not be admitted, since He is the Lord and King over this kingdom, and not the kingdom itself. Moreover, it is clear that the sower of the mustard-seed in the field represents Jesus Christ.

You all know what mustard is; you know that its taste is so pungent that when put into the mouth it sometimes brings tears, and that it is useful both as a condiment and as a medicine. In this climate it is quite a small plant, but in Palestine it grows to be much larger, and has been known to develop into a large tree.[1]

''The grain of mustard,'' Our Lord goes on to say, *''is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown up it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.''* As a matter of fact the mustard-seed is not the least of all seeds; there are many others much smaller, but Christ called it the least of all by a figure of speech and the better to illustrate the idea He wished to convey, and because the bulk of His hearers believed it to be the least of all seeds.[2] ''As a small seed like this,'' Jesus said, ''grows up and develops into a great tree, so will it be with the kingdom of

[1]It is narrated in the Talmud that Rabbi Simeon had in his garden a mustard plant as large as a fig-tree and that one could climb into its branches without danger.

[2]Jesus Christ always spoke the language of the common people. You will search in vain through His expressions for the language of the astronomer, or the philosopher, or the physicist, or the botanist. He was the teacher of the people in all things that concerned God and the soul, but not in human sciences. This is the great rule of St. Jerome: *Loquitur secundum vulgarem opinionem.* It is hardly necessary to say that the scope of His dis-

heaven, which is My Church. She is small, a little flock, a group of fishermen and publicans, who follow Me, men unknown to the world and despised; but this small flock will soon grow to be a large one, and the small seed will sprout and spring up and grow into a great tree and will extend its branches over all the earth." This was a figure used by Our Lord Jesus Christ to forecast the growth of His Church and the miraculous increase in the numbers of her children.

There is a well-known observation of St. Augustine, which, though familiar, is still true and full of wisdom, to the effect that the greatest things, from being constantly seen, become common or seem so: *Assiduitate vilescunt.* What greater or more sublime sight is there than that of the sun which illuminates and warms the earth; or the millions of stars that stud the vaults of heaven; or the earth in springtime, rising from death to life, and, like a young bride robing herself in a mantle of beautiful colors, and filling the air with fragrance! And yet we hardly ever advert to these marvels, because familiarity with them makes us less observant, if not wholly forgetful, of their grandeur: *Assiduitate vilescunt.* And the same happens when we contemplate the Church; seeing her now established in every quarter of the globe in all the majesty and glory of her stupendous creations, we are likely to forget her humble origin and to lose sight of the miracle of her propagation and preservation. But let us go

courses and parables was always wholly moral. He made use of sensible objects, taking them in the sense in which they were understood by the plain people, and not by scientists, and conveyed His instruction through what interested them.

back through the centuries and betake ourselves in imagination to distant Galilee, where Jesus spoke to the apostles and to the multitudes. Look first upon the divine Master Himself; until yesterday He had lived in an ordinary workshop, laboring as any other might, and so poor that He had not whereon to lay His weary head. Moreover, He was furiously assailed by men in authority and by the learned. With Him were a few fishermen and publicans, very poor like Himself, not learned, or powerful, or wealthy. He did not appeal to the passions; on the contrary, He made war on them; He did not flatter the people, He taught them and announced to them the most unpalatable truths. The little band of twelve were uneducated men, ignorant of the world, ingenuous as children; who had always lived in that lovely country, wholly isolated from the rest of mankind, from men of learning and power and from the great of the earth. The head of that little band did not delude Himself as to the enormous difficulty of His mission; He knew with a certain knowledge that in the conflict with His enemies He would be overcome and that He would die on the cross; and this He knew so well that He repeatedly spoke of it to His disciples, who could not believe it. Was not this little band of men, wandering through the hills of Judea, illiterate, without home or money, forced day by day to beg their bread, as weak and despicable as men could well be? Are they not fitly symbolized by the grain of mustard that the man sowed in his field? Certainly, no simile could be more appropriate. Very well, then; see now how this band has grown, how the tree has sent

forth its branches: Those twelve companions of Jesus Christ have become a thousand; those seventy-two disciples have become hundreds of thousands of priests; the Vicar of Jesus Christ now sits where in those days sat the emperor, the master of the then known world; the Herods have passed away and so have the Scribes and Pharisees and the great of that day; the names of consuls, senators, and emperors, who then held in their hands the fate of nations and peoples, are rarely if ever mentioned; thrones and dynasties and republics rise and fall; laws and institutions and sciences change; one people rises upon the ruins of another only in turn to pass away and to give place to a third; but the work of Jesus Christ has stood and still stands; it is a tree that grows in strength and beauty, century by century, year by year, and day by day.

Round about this giant tree, whose branches throw a cooling shade over all the earth, the greatest geniuses, those birds of strong wing, whose home is on high, wearied of their flight and disgusted with their own wisdom, have come century after century to seek rest and refreshment in the shade of its teaching, which alone gives peace, light, and contentment. What Jesus Christ then saw and foretold, His apostles could only hope for and believe; we, more fortunate than they, see it. The work of Jesus Christ is the continuation of His Person. Time separates us from His work, but not from His Person.[1] To see and foretell with such certainty and clearness the marvelous growth of that small grain, it was necessary to

[1]Didon, Jesus Christ, vol. i, p. 364.

read the future, to be master of coming events, in a word, to be absolute arbiter of all things; such, then, was Jesus Christ when, nineteen hundred years ago, in a small corner of Palestine, He foretold such greatness to His disciples.

The Fathers ask why it was that Jesus Christ among so many seeds chose the mustard to typify the miraculous expansion of His kingdom on earth? Why did He not choose the cedar, or the terebinth, or the pine, or some other tree of more noble form and stately growth, and therefore more fitting to adumbrate the future greatness of His Church? Because, replies St. Augustine, as mustard seasons food and makes it palatable, so does the teaching of the Gospel, by the example of Jesus Christ, make what is hard and harsh sweet and agreeable; as mustard drives bad humors from the body, so does the teaching of Jesus Christ dissipate the bad seed of the passions; as fire purifies all things, so does the teaching of Christ cleanse our minds and hearts.[1]

Jesus Christ followed this parable up with another and a shorter one, but intended, under a different form, to bring home the same truth.

"*The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.*" You will kindly call to mind, my friends, a truth which I have so often insisted upon, but which is so valuable and opportune that I can not help again speaking of it. The truths which Jesus Christ taught were the

[1] "Sinapis granum humores decoquit corporum, fides autem libidinum fluenta consumit . . . granum sinapis membrorum viscerum calefacit, fidei autem vigor peccata conburit."—St. Augustine, apud A Lapide.

most exalted and truly divine, and yet see how simply He states them! He is speaking to a poor people and He accommodates Himself to their limited intelligence. He, the eternal Wisdom, comes down to their level. He employs the most common images, which were there under their very eyes, while He was speaking to them, and which all could see. It was a grain of mustard, or a tree, or the native birds of the country, or again the leaven which the housewife mixes with the meal. Could images be more familiar than these or more easily understood? And such Jesus uses to lift the minds of His listeners to the contemplation of the most sublime truths! His language is simple, yet not common; clear, yet strong and unstudied; eloquent, yet without art; full of feeling, yet unmistakably authoritative; listening to Him one would be attracted by the truths He uttered, rather than by His style; He resembles a clear and polished crystal through which a ray of light passes, and only the light is seen. One would say that truth was born with that vesture, so well does it fit it. What a lesson for us teachers of the people and dispensers of the divine word! How should we have this divine Model constantly before our minds, especially while speaking to you, the children of the people! How should we imitate His clearness and simplicity; His bearing, so full of dignity and suavity; His fatherly kindness to all and particularly to the poor and the ignorant, not seeking to please but to be of service. O divine Master, grant that we may ever follow the example Thou hast given us; that we may preach, not ourselves but the truth; that we may

desire solely Thy glory and the saving of souls, for whom thou hast poured out Thy blood. And now for the application of the parable.

Leaven is made of meal properly acidulated; then it is mixed with more meal, or rather with dough, which in a little while it leavens, dilates, and so acts upon that the bread is made palatable, easy to digest and healthy. Who could nourish himself with unleavened bread?[1] Now what does this leaven represent? It represents Jesus Christ, or what is the same, His teaching or His grace. And what does the meal, or the dough, with which the leaven is mixed, represent? It represents the whole human race.[2] The divine Word, the infinite wisdom and virtue of the Father, took unto Himself a body and soul, in the unity of His personality, in the immaculate womb of Mary, and to that blessed body and soul He communicated the fulness of His gifts, so that in that same humanity He became the center of light and truth and grace, and, to use the Gospel metaphor, the divine leaven of the whole human family, because from Him and

[1]It is now very well known that leaven is the effect of fermentation, and fermentation is nothing more than the production of microbes, which propagate with surprising rapidity.

[2]We see in the interpretation of this parable how timely is the rule of St. John Chrysostom, who notes that it is not necessary that the parable should be applicable in every detail to the doctrine which is being explained. Whom does the woman, who mixes the leaven with dough, represent? God Himself? Impossible. Why are there three measures of meal? What do thy signify? One says they signify the three parts of the world, or the three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa. But now there are five, and how shall we extricate ourselves? St. Jerome says they correspond to the triple appetite of man, namely, reason, concupiscence, and anger. But even this explanation does not seem satisfactory. We should be on our guard against these minute applications, which abound in certain mystical writers and expose the word of God itself to ridicule.

from Him alone, we receive every good and blessing: "*And of His fulness we have all received.*" And now you see how this leaven works, when mixed with the meal; it works slowly and silently, it works by being brought into contact with the meal; it works by communicating its own virtue to the meal, and by diffusing its virtue through every part of it that is in a condition to receive it; it works so that the leavened meal becomes itself capable of indefinitely communicating leaven to other meal. The virtue and efficacy of the leaven are such that they go on ceaselessly communicating what they themselves effect. The divine leaven of Jesus Christ and of His Gospel works in the same way; it communicates itself to souls little by little; it penetrates them; it clothes them round about; it transforms them silently and almost without constraint; but in order that it may work, there must be some sort of contact between Jesus Christ and our soul. This contact is effected by the word of God, which passes through eye and ear to the heart; it is effected through the Church, in which Jesus Christ abides and works; it is effected through the sacraments, the agencies or infallible channels of grace; it is effected above all by receiving within us with the proper dispositions the adorable body of Jesus Christ Himself in the Blessed Eucharist.

Now this divine leaven of truth and grace may be received by any one who wills to receive it, and when received it can be communicated to others, and in imparting to others what itself effects, its virtue is not in the least diminished. The divine leaven, brought on earth by Jesus Christ and de-

posited in His Church, grows and expands day by day, and there will come a day when the whole human family will be permeated with it and gloriously transformed. The apostles and their successors were the first bearers and disseminators of this leaven, and we, according to our powers, continue their work.[1] And wo to us if we do not labor according to our strength to diffuse this life-giving leaven in the souls of those committed to our care.[2]

After relating this very short parable of the leaven, the Evangelist goes on: "*All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes, and without parables He did not speak to them.*" From this statement of St. Matthew it might be inferred that Jesus always in preaching presented His teachings in the form of parables, and never otherwise; but this is contradicted by the fact that Jesus very frequently announced the most exalted truths without conveying them under the disguise of parables; and of this we have an incontrover-

[1]"Sicut fermentum multam farinam transmutat in suam virtutem, ita et vos (o Apostoli) totum mundum transmutabitis . . . sicut fermentum suffoditur quidem, non autem destruitur, sed paulatim ad suum habitum omnia transmutat, sic et prædicatione vestra continget."—St. Joan. Chrysost. in hunc locum.

"Fermentum cum sit magnitudine parvum, specie simplex, natura commune, tantam fortitudinem intrinsecus gerit, ut cum reconditum fuerit in farina, succus hic totam massam faciat esse quod ipse est, et ita semper universum cumulum aspersionis suæ vigore diffundit, ut omnem magnitudinem pollinis faciat fermentum, ac si res ipsa fortitudine sua molem sibi proprii vigoris acquirit . . . Recte ergo fermento Dominus comparatur, qui cum esset specie homo, humilitate parvus, imbecillitate dejectus, tanta intrinsecæ sapientiæ virute pollebat, ut doctrinam ipsius mundus iste vix capere possit: qui cum se coepit per totum orbem divinitatis vigore diffundere statim omnium hominum genus in substantiam suam sui potestate pertraxit."—St. Ambrose.

[2]The three measures of fermented meal are equivalent to about sixty-six pounds of our measure.

tible proof in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St. Matthew himself, where the celebrated Sermon on the Mount is narrated, in which, we may say, is contained the whole Gospel teaching on morals, and there is not in the entire sermon a trace of a parable. How, then, are these words of the Evangelist to be understood? In the parables related by St. Matthew in this place, and in the two which we have just explained, the idea of the Church and of the kingdom of heaven to be set up on earth and propagated everywhere is persistently urged; and this is a truth which Jesus Christ uniformly presents under the veil of a parable, either because by so doing He could make it more intelligible to honest minds, or because it was not prudent to reveal in all its magnitude the great fact of the future,[1] or because it would have run counter to many existing prejudices, there being many who would not have believed it; nor was there at that time any real necessity of speaking openly on the subject.

To the words I have just quoted the Evangelist adds these by way of explanation and confirmation: *"That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."* Matthew wishes to say that Jesus spoke in parables, fulfilling the prophecy which David had centuries before announced,[2] and clearly making known to men what

[1]The calling of the Gentiles to the Faith was a scandal to the Hebrews, who thought the Messias should restrict His work or mission to Israel alone, and hence it was prudent at that time to veil this great fact under the shadow of parables.

[2]Ps. lxxvii.

the prophets and patriarchs had from the beginning obscurely promised and pointed out. For it is very manifest that everything that Jesus Christ did or taught was under some form contained in germ in Moses and the Prophets; that the whole patriarchal, prophetical, and Mosaic economy was an introduction to the kingdom of Christ and was a forecasting of His teaching; and hence Christ Himself appeals to the prophets and to Moses, and protests that He is come, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

HOMILY XXV

BRETHREN: We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God in all things pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: Strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory, in all patience and long-suffering, with joy giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins.—EPISTLE, *Col.* i. 9-14.

THE Letter to the faithful of Colosse, a city of Asia Minor, in Phrygia, from which these five verses are taken, was written by St. Paul in Rome in the year sixty-three or sixty-seven of our era, during the time of his first imprisonment. This Church had not been founded by him, but by his disciple Epaphras, who was also the bearer of the Letter. It consists of two parts wholly distinct from each other, the one dogmatic, the other moral.

St. Paul had heard while in prison, probably from Epaphras himself, that the faithful of that Church were in grave danger of being led astray

by certain teachers of error, most likely Agnostics, or, as usual, Judaisers. The former, by combining certain philosophical theories, with which they were imbued, with the teachings of faith, held many errors concerning the Personality of Christ, and were introducing a new and strange worship of angels. The latter still clung to certain practices of the Law, which could not be reconciled with the Christian faith. The Letter is one of the shortest of St. Paul's, but full of deepest meaning.

The few verses which I have read for you, and which are from the preface of the Letter, are, as you will have observed from hearing them, involved, obscure, and difficult to explain, because the truths are very condensed, the one woven into the other in a style of speech wholly Hebraic and which to our ears is extremely harsh. Still I shall, with the help of God, if you give me your attention, try to explain them.

St. Paul, writing in his own name and in that of Timothy, begins his Letter with nearly the same salutations, usual with him in all his other Letters; then he thanks God for the faith and charity of the Colossians, as taught by the Gospel received by them from Epaphras, who has given him information concerning them. Continuing, he says: *"We cease not to pray for you."* It is worthy of note that St. Paul often in his Letters assures the faithful that he prays for them. There is nothing so frequently insisted on in Holy Writ as prayer; it is an inspiration of faith, a craving of nature, a yearning of the heart; it is, as has been beautifully said, the pulse of the soul. In joy or sorrow, in hope or fear, prayer is a neces-

sity for one who believes in God. We pray for ourselves and we pray for others; to pray for ourselves is natural and suggests no sort of difficulty; but to pray for others may seem strange and presumptuous. Some one will say: "We are poor and miserable and full of faults, so that we hardly dare go before God to pray for ourselves, and shall we then presume to pray for others and make ourselves intercessors for them? Does not this seem unreasonable, does it not savor of pride? It is enough for us to pray for ourselves." No, my friends, let us pray for ourselves, certainly; but let us pray for others also; there is not a shadow of pride in doing so, and it is an act most acceptable to God. Prayer, if properly understood, is essentially an act of humility, because in praying we recognize that we are needy and we cast ourselves at God's feet; hence prayer, whether said for ourselves or for others, is always an exercise of humility. It would be pride, if in praying for others we should consider our own worthiness and put our merits before God, as giving us a right to be heard. Prayer, then, offered up for our brethren, whoever they may be, is most pleasing to God; it is a daughter of that charity, so frequently recommended in the Gospel, which makes the needs of others our own, and impels us to come to their aid by appealing to Him to whom all things are possible. Prayer in itself is the daughter of humility, and prayer for others, the daughter of charity.

Here is a father who has many sons, all of whom are dependent on him. One of these, after asking a favor of the father for himself, asks the

same favor for a brother, who does not and, it may be, will not ask it for himself. Will not that father be touched at hearing one of his sons interceding for another? And will not this act of fraternal affection be pleasing to the father and incline him to pardon his son, who has been himself, it may be, ungrateful and forgetful of his duty? Believe me, my friends, the prayer, which we offer up to God for our brethren, has a special efficacy, because it goes up to Him laden with the fragrance of mutual charity and inspired by the words of that prayer which He Himself has taught us, saying: "*Our* Father, who art in heaven." Let us pray then, and pray always, both for ourselves and for all others.

St. Paul prayed for the Colossians, but for what did he pray? Possibly that they might become wealthy, or powerful, or rise to honor and fame, or abound in material prosperity? Such things men of the world ask and desire, but they could not so much as enter into the mind of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Listen to what he says: "*I beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God.*" This is the first gift that St. Paul asks for the Colossians. Now, my friends, in what does virtue, and sanctity, which is the height of all virtue, consist? Evidently in doing what God wills; whosoever conforms himself in all things to the will of God, has touched the very summit of all sanctity. But to be conformable in all things to God's will, one must know what His will is. How and in what way does God make His will known to us? In two ways; first, by the light of reason, a way that is very imperfect, long, and uncertain,

and along which it is given to very few to journey; next, by the light of faith, a way that is perfect, short, and safe, and most easy to all, and in which none is at a disadvantage. And without doubt it is of this knowledge of the will of God that St. Paul is speaking, and which he prays that the faithful of Colosse may possess, and with which they may be filled, so that they may not only know the truths revealed by God but also the way to put them in practice: "*In all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*"[1]

My friends, God will not fail to make known these truths to us; He is ready to illuminate our minds and to give them to us in all fulness, but He wills that we should do what is necessary on our part to receive them; He offers them, but we must stretch forth our hand and take them; and He wills this because He respects our liberty and desires that we shall have the merit of acquiring them. And how can we arrive at a knowledge of the will of God? By listening to His word and to His teaching in church, where it is expounded, and by reading Holy Scripture and having it explained. There runs a stately river whose waters pass through fields green with a promising harvest; the sun's hot rays dry up the fields and parch the growing grain, threatening to make void the toil of the husbandman. Whose fault is it? There is abundant water, the growing crop needs irrigation, and why does not the farmer open the sluices

[1]Wisdom has reference solely to theoretical knowledge or to principles; understanding refers to the practical application of these principles. The word *spiritual* indicates the nature of the truths known, or possibly their origin, coming as they do from the Holy Ghost.

and let the fertilizing water flow in upon his fields? If the crops fail he will have only his sloth to blame. The waters of truth flow abundantly in the House of God; here His will is made known, and why do we not go there and drink of those living waters and allow them to flow over the fields of our souls? Why do we not go there to learn the will of God, and, knowing it, make our own conformable to it? Let us go and we shall be filled with the knowledge of the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

But what will be the good of having the mind inundated with light and of knowing the will of God if we do not do His will, once it is known? It will be no good at all; on the contrary, such knowledge if not followed by good works, will make us inexcusable and more guilty. Hence St. Paul, after having implored for the Colossians a full knowledge of the truth, goes on to add: "*That you may walk worthy of God,*"[1] that is, that you may think and speak and act as becomes one who serves God. One in the service of a great personage or of a great ruler, if he is a man of intelligence and feeling, is sensible of the obligations which his duty imposes upon him and of the necessity of doing honor to the dignity of his superior, and he studiously avoids doing anything unworthy of the confidence with which he has been honored. Now we serve, not only an exalted personage and a great ruler, but the Ruler of rulers; how careful, then, should we be to honor and dignify such a service, and to exalt the office en-

[1]Again I say that the word *ambulare*, to walk, here signifies the *way of living and acting*, or behaving.

trusted to us? Servants, or I should say, adopted children of God, let us so walk and live that we may be worthy both of Him and of ourselves: *"That you may walk worthy of God."* When the son of a king dishonors his father by unbecoming conduct, people point at him as he goes by, saying: Shame upon him; he forgets his dignity; he dishonors his father and drags his good name in the dust. What should they say of us, my friends, when we lower to the very dust our dignity of sons of God?

If we walk as becomes those who serve God, *"in all things pleasing,"* doing, that is, what is pleasing to God, and keeping His law, what will be our reward? St. Paul tells us: *"We shall be fruitful in every good work."* And here we should not omit to make an observation that is worth remembering. The Apostle from time to time in his Letters rises to the contemplation of the most exalted theoretical truths, and while flooded with this dazzling light, which inebriates him and carries him out of himself, it should seem that he would forget the practical and ordinary affairs of the world, but such is not the case. In an instant he comes down from those divine heights to the common duties of this every-day existence, and these he enforces as the consequences of those supernatural truths. And here we have an instance of this, for after having spoken of the knowledge of the will of God, of wisdom and spiritual intelligence, he admonishes us that we must *"be fruitful in every good work,"* that is, we must exemplify in all our works the gifts which he asks of God for the Colossians. Do you under-

stand, my friends? All knowledge and wisdom of celestial things will be as nothing if they do not lead us on to do good works and to live well. If this is wanting all else is worthless; all else is but a shadow and the semblance of virtue, a phosphorescent light that gleams for an instant and then goes out, an empty sound and a tinkling cymbal. Let us see to it, then, that our faith and our knowledge of the things of God lead us on to well-doing and to the performance of every good work: *"Being fruitful in every good work."*

A Christian life, rich in holy deeds, will augment our knowledge of holy things, says the Apostle, we *"increasing in the knowledge of God."* This seems a repetition of what he said a little before, but it is not; these words contain a profound truth, which it is worth while touching upon.

Give me a man, a Christian, who knows his duties and discharges them, and he will, by this constant and fruitful observance, not only acquire the habit of the Christian virtues, but will feel growing within him an esteem for them, a love and practical knowledge of them; and if he goes on practising them, he will little by little also feel an intimate and increasing persuasion of their goodness and excellence. A virtuous Christian will experience something analogous to what a good artist experiences. As a good artist by long practice goes on perfecting himself in his art, he comes at length so to love it that he can not give it up; so also with virtue, the longer it is practised the more it is appreciated as beautiful and worthy of being loved; and the more it is loved the better

it is appreciated, until finally it becomes almost impossible to leave off practising it. This explains a phenomenon that we frequently witness in good and simple Christians, who have not given much study to their religion, because they have not had the opportunity and it may be have not the talent, but who nevertheless have so deep and unshaken a certainty of its excellence that they would be ready to lay down their lives for it. Whence did they get this certainty of the truth of their faith? There is only one reply. In the practice of it and in the exercise of the virtues it imposes. If the lack of Christian deeds little by little veils the light of faith and finally extinguishes it, the doing of them, on the contrary, helps wonderfully to make the light clear and strong. This is why we have the sad sight of men, learned in the sacred sciences, who end by apostatizing; and why the poor sons of the people and poor girls lowly born enter religion, cross seas, evangelize pagans, and die for the Faith. Good deeds have increased their knowledge of heavenly things: *Increasing in the knowledge of God.*

The third object for which our apostle prayed was perseverance in well-doing, which we must hope for, not so much from our own weak efforts, as from the power of God: "*Strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory,*[1] *in all patience and long-suffering with joy.*" St. Paul is always praying for the Colossians. "Timothy and I," he says, "never cease praying that God,

[1]This is one of the usual Hebraisms: *According to the power of His glory*, that is, according to His glorious power, *glorious*, because it is manifested in the midst of brightness and splendor.

after giving you a full knowledge of the truth and the grace to practise virtue and live lives worthy of Christians, may also give you the fortitude to suffer whatever must be endured by those who follow the straight and narrow way: *In all patience.*" Note well these words, "*In all patience;*" that is, we must be prepared to live as Christians and to practise virtue in spite, not of this or that sorrow or suffering, which may be agreeable to us, but in *all patience;* there is no exception of time, or place, or circumstance. And how can we be ready to suffer, we may ask? St. Paul answers: By a tireless patience, by a patience that is amiable and gentle, by a patience that refuses to be revenged even when opportunity offers, in a word, by *long-suffering.* And yet this is not all, for he adds: "*With joy.*" St. Paul wishes us to be ready to suffer, not only with patience and longanimity, but with joy. To suffer with joy! What height of perfection is this? Until then the world had never heard so strange and divine a teaching. It had heard of some philosophers, who taught that a virtuous man ought to suffer courageously in the cause of virtue; that he ought to despise pain and those who cause it; it had heard of that proud doctrine of the Stoics, that virtue is its own reward, and it was able to comprehend that the power to suffer is to be sought in pride and in one's own capacity for endurance; it had heard of Regulus, of Socrates, and others who generously faced pain and death rather than fail in their duty; but it had never heard of any one who believed, as St. Paul proclaimed, that it was possible to suffer and die

for truth and virtue, and to suffer and die with joy. This is precisely what the Gospel teaches, and thousands upon thousands of men and women of every class and of every age have endured the most excruciating torments and died the most cruel deaths with radiant countenances, with a hymn of thanks upon their lips, and with ecstatic joy in their hearts.

This sentence of St. Paul grows stronger and stronger, as member succeeds member, each containing some new and deep thought: *"Giving thanks to God, the Father,"* he goes on, *"who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light."* Besides praying for you, he says to the Colossians, we give thanks to God, the Father, the Beginning without a beginning of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, to the august Trinity, because He has deigned to call both you and us to the lot of the heritage of the saints,[1] that is, to call us to the Faith, and therefore to holiness of life, in the light, which is the Gospel. This is the sense of the words of St. Paul. What, my friends, is the greatest benefit God has conferred upon us? Without doubt, that of calling us to the light of faith and to the dignity of sons and of heirs to eternal life. You know how many millions of our brethren are still in the midst of the darkness of error. What merit have we that we should be preferred before them? None. We have, then, been

[1]The word *lot* or *portion* in this connection signifies a *heritage*. Why is it called *lot?* Because it was customary to divide a *heritage* by lot, and because fields were measured with ropes, as it is written: *Sortes mihi ceciderunt in præclaris*, that is, my inheritance was a good one. So also we read *Mittens funiculum sortis*, to signify that the inheritance was measured with a rope.

called into the kingdom of light, that is, into the Church; we have the Faith and with the Faith all the means necessary to walk in the straight way that leads to heaven. And for this incomparable blessing how often do we give thanks to God? How often, my friends? Possibly very seldom in the course of the year. How ungrateful we are!

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." St. Paul attributes our deliverance to God the Father, inasmuch as He gave His only Son for us; but of course you know that, if our salvation is attributed equally to the three divine Persons, who willed it by an act of eternal love and mercy, it was wrought solely by the Second Person in the humanity He took unto Himself and in which He paid our entire ransom. *"Who hath snatched us or delivered us from the power of darkness."* In that word *snatched, eripuit* in Latin, you can see what an effort Jesus Christ made to free us, an effort which cost Him His life on the cross. Undoubtedly He could have taken us from the hands of the enemy by a single act of His will, but had He done this, while the power of God would have been apparent, His goodness and His justice would not have been equally manifest, whereas by His death, His wisdom and goodness, His power and justice, are all revealed, and combine, like so many rays, into a single pencil of light.

As light, in Holy Scripture, signifies truth and faith, and God Himself; so darkness signifies error, unbelief, the principle of evil, and the devil. Hence God the Father snatched us from the hands

of our enemy and His, namely, from the devil, and by faith He translates us from darkness into the kingdom of His most beloved Son,[1] that is, into the kingdom of His Church.

"In whom" (His Son) *we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins."* It can be said that in these two verses St. Paul has given us in a few words the whole mystery of our salvation: He speaks of the Father and of the Son; of deliverance from the tyrant power of the devil; of the Church and of our redemption wrought through the death of Jesus Christ. We, because of sin, were condemned to endless death; Jesus, wishing to safeguard the eternal rights of justice, offered Himself to receive in His own Person the chastisement that should have been inflicted on us; we were doomed to endless death, Jesus put Himself in our place, died in our stead, and we are freed from all debt, by making His merits our own through faith and the sacraments. Thus was our redemption wrought out; thus was accomplished the remission of our sins.

My friends, after the pattern of the Apostle and making our own his words and his meaning, let us lift our eyes, our minds, and hearts to heaven and thank God the Father for having given us His only Son, for having snatched us from the hands of the prince of darkness, for having placed us in the bosom of His Church, for having washed away our sins in His blood, and let us earnestly pray Him that He will share these blessings, so lavishly and mercifully granted us, with our brothers who are still in the darkness of error and

[1]*Son of His love,* a Hebraism meaning *most beloved Son.*

in the shadow of death. To Him be honor and glory now and always for all ages. Amen.

HOMILY XXVI

At that *time Jesus said to His disciples:* When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, he that readeth let him understand: Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains, and he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of the house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And wo to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath: for there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If, therefore, they shall say to you: Behold He is in the desert, go ye not out: Behold He is in the closets, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immedi-

ately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you, also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.—GOSPEL, *Matt.* xxiv. 15-35.

IT WAS the Tuesday following the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem and preceding His passion and death. He had preached the whole day in the Temple and debated with the Scribes and Pharisees, who pressed Him with difficulties of every kind in the hope of tripping Him up. As the day was declining He left the city and set out for Bethany, a short distance away, to go to the home of Lazarus and his sisters and there to rest and take something to eat. On going out from the Temple the disciples drew His attention to the massive structure[1] and to its

[1]The Temple rebuilt after the captivity of Babylon, under Zoro-

marvelous wealth; why, we know not, as this seemed entirely unnecessary in the case of the divine Master. The reply of Jesus was pointed and brief: "*Do you see all these things? Amen, I say to you there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed.*" Hearing this answer the apostles were amazed and terrified, and followed the Master in silence; they went down with Him through the valley of Cedron to the east and then went up to the Mount of Olives where they sat down. The disciples, whose minds had been troubled by the terrible prophecy of the destruction of the Temple, which Jesus had just uttered, took Him aside and said to Him: "*Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the consummation of the world?*"[1] They put three questions to Jesus and He answered them one by one, but before doing so He gave in outline the calamities and seductions that would precede the end of the world[2] and foretold that the Gospel would

babel and Esdras, was far less magnificent than the first one, or Solomon's; still it was also a marvel of construction and richness. Herod the Great, to ingratiate himself with the Hebrews, restored and beautified it twenty years before the coming of Christ, and the work was still going on at the time of Christ. There were stones 36 and even 43 feet long, 18 feet wide and 10 feet thick, and all so fitted together that the whole seemed one single stone. The upper part of the Temple inside and out was all resplendent with gold, so that when the light of the sun was upon it, it seemed all one living flame.—Bonghi, p. 364-365. Didon, vol. ii, p. 310.

[1]The apostles going aside interrogated Jesus, because it was perilous to ask such a question concerning the Temple. Any one who hinted that the Temple could be destroyed, and with it the nation, was guilty of a capital offense. The instance of St. Stephen and the hatred and accusations against St. Paul prove this.

[2]Verses 4-14.

be preached everywhere. Then He went on to speak of the signs that would be seen before the destruction of Jerusalem and to suggest certain precautions;[1] and next he replied to the third question concerning the end of the world.[2] And now we come to the explanation which must be brief and mainly historical, if we would not go beyond the limits which our time imposes.

When will the Temple be destroyed, so that not a stone will be left upon a stone? This is the question, and here is the answer: *"When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place; he that readeth, let him understand."*[3]

The prophet Daniel had foretold, five centuries before it took place, that in the Temple, then destroyed, after the death of Christ, there would be the abomination of desolation. At the time of Christ and some years before, and for more than

[1]Verses 15-21.

[2]Verses 26-34.

[3]Concerning the prophecy of Daniel and the *abomination of desolation* standing in a holy place, there are many interpretations, each different from the others.

Some, and among them a number of Fathers, think that the prophecy of Daniel refers directly to the profanation of the Temple that took place under the Macedonian king (Antiochus the Illustrious). The Temple was then horribly profaned; the statue of Jupiter was set up in the holy place and the sacrilegious orgies of Paganism performed there. At the time of the Machabees, the liberty of the nation was regained, the Temple reconquered and purified, and sacred worship was again solemnly restored.

Others think that the celebrated prophecy of Daniel refers to the profanation of the Temple by the Romans. On close examination the first opinion seems more probable. Consult the learned work of Card. Meignan on Daniel. This kind of study, sad to say, is not only neglected in Italy, but, I had almost said, unknown, and we have gone so far as to be unwilling even to confess our extreme poverty.

thirty years after His death, there had been frequent struggles between the Jews and Gentiles both in Judea itself and outside of it, and these often developed into furious battles accompanied with frightful slaughter. Under Nero the Jewish revolt broke out with incredible fury. The insults against their religion were resented by the Jews, who longed for independence; their passions, too, were inflamed by false prophets, who promised them that they would be victorious and that Christ would come and free them from the yoke of the stranger, and they rose in rebellion everywhere; there was unheard of carnage on both sides, the Romans being sometimes victorious and sometimes the Jews. The Romans under the leadership first of Cestius Gallus, then of Vespasian, and finally of Titus, the son of Vespasian, laid seige to Jerusalem with a powerful army, and after many bloody conflicts took it, sacked it, burned it, and razed it to the ground, leaving only three towers and a wall of the Temple standing. When the Romans encamped around the city they displayed their banner, on which were figures of idols, objects of abomination to the Jews. This was the abomination in the holy place foretold by Daniel and Christ; and this was the forerunner of the desolation to follow, and the sign given to the apostles and to them that believed: "*He that reads let him understand.*" These are not the words of Christ, but of the Evangelist, who puts them into the mouth of Christ. Christ wrote nothing. They are a warning of St. Matthew, who wrote about thirty years before the catastrophe, as if to say: "Whosoever reads these words, let

him be on his guard and look to himself. When you see the enemy camped around Jerusalem, flee to the mountains; there is no time to be lost. *He that is on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of his house.*" As I have observed elsewhere, the houses of the Jews were so constructed that as a rule the approach to the roof or terrace was by a stairs on the outside, and this arrangement will help us to understand the foregoing words. "*And he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat.*" These two expressions will give us an idea of the swiftness of the Roman generals and of the extraordinary rapidity with which they invested the city and made escape impossible. An instance of their celerity is the fact that in three days they dug a ditch about twenty-five feet in depth, so completely enclosing the city that not one of the unfortunate inhabitants shut up there could attempt to escape without falling into the hands of a pitiless foe and suffering death either on the cross or by the sword.

While Jesus was speaking of that incomparable slaughter His thoughts naturally went out to the weak and to those whose sufferings would be the most painful, and in accents of inexpressible tenderness He said: "*Wo to them that are with child and that give suck in those days.*" The lot of those unhappy mothers, unable to flee and fearing for themselves and for their children, touched the heart of Jesus and evoked sighs of grief.

"*Pray,*" Jesus continues, "*that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath.*" The rigors of the winter season would increase the incon-

venience and hardships of those who fled; and if their flight took place on a Sabbath when the Jews did not think it lawful to make a journey of more than about three-quarters of a mile, to the trials of travel would be added the pangs of conscience.[1]

There is a point here worth noting, my friends. Jesus says: *"Pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath."* It is clear, then, that by prayer those horrors could have been lessened and the chance of war partially changed. But how could this be done if the result of the war depended upon the Roman generals? Jesus wished to say that God, in answer to the prayers of man, could have so shaped political and military events that precipitous flight would not have taken place either during the winter season or on the Sabbath, and thus the sufferings of that awful disaster would have been somewhat lessened. Appreciate, then, the power of prayer in purely human and natural affairs, and in public and private calamities, and have recourse to it with confidence and resignation. The hearts even of bad men and unbelievers are in the hands of God, and He can by ways and means not wholly unknown, move them and bend them to do His will.

I remember hearing a learned and very good man say that he could not understand prayer as a petition against contagion, or floods and the like, inasmuch as this would be in reality to ask God to

[1]Hebrew rigorism did not permit on the Sabbath a journey of above two-thirds of a mile. Under these distressing circumstances it was surely lawful to break that rule, and to observe it would have been a Pharisaical interpretation, which Jesus Christ could not approve. He stated the case just as it was, without concerning Himself about removing the prejudice.

work a miracle and to change the laws of nature. Certainly, if God were asked to change the laws of nature, the objection would have some force. But God in hearing our prayers is not obliged to change the laws of nature, which would mean to disturb the whole physical order at every instant, or as often as we offered a prayer. The laws of nature remain as they are, but God knows how to derogate from them without changing them. And do not we by natural forces change the laws of nature? By using the forces of nature we throw water to great heights; we make citadels of steel float upon the waves of the sea; we guide the lightning where we will; and we imprison terrible forces within the boilers and cylinders of locomotives. Why can not God, who is absolute Master of all things, do as much? No, when we pray to God, we do not ask a miracle, we only ask that He, being omnipotent, will so arrange things that He will grant us the favor we ask, in the way which to His divine wisdom may seem best.

"*For there shall be then great tribulation,*" adds Our Lord, "*such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be.*" Some may be tempted to think that this sentence of Our Lord, concerning the catastrophe that befell Jerusalem and all Judea, somewhat exaggerated. By no means; it expresses exactly a purely historical truth. Go through the pages of history and you will not find anywhere a disaster, which all things considered, can be compared with the fall of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation. We have the particulars of that frightful conflict from one who was himself an

eye-witness of it, who had taken part in it, and who, being a Hebrew, may be entirely relied on, namely, Josephus Flavius.

For some years a fierce and desperate struggle had been kept up between the Jews and the Roman legions. They fought hand to hand, every inch of territory being disputed, and when finally the cities of Galilee were taken one by one, nearly all the surviving Jews withdrew into Jerusalem. The Christians alone, remembering the prophecy of Jesus Christ, fled to the mountains of Judea, to the west of the Jordan near Pella, thus escaping the supreme disaster. It would seem that there were in Jerusalem and its environs close upon two millions of Hebrews, determined to conquer or to perish amid the ruins of their country. Pestilence and famine raged to such an extent among the masses of the people that a mother killed her own child to appease with its flesh the cravings of hunger. Day after day the conflict was renewed and no quarter was given on either side, and to this were added all the horrors of civil war within the walls of the city. Three factions, under the leadership of the three infamous men, Eleazer, John, and Simon, each of whom proclaimed himself the Messias, and gave an infallible promise of victory to his followers, fought hand to hand, day after day, and filled the streets and the Temple with blood and the bodies of the slain. Within the city the fury of partisan hatred raged, and outside the Romans pressed upon them on all sides and gave them no quarter. Fearful signs in the heavens and mysterious voices issuing from the Holy of Holies filled the people with terror, and a man ran

night and day through the streets, crying out incessantly: "Wo to thee, Jerusalem! Wo to the Temple!" until he was stricken down and slain by the Roman soldiery. Called upon by Titus to surrender, the only reply of these miserable men was: "Never!" Any one who spoke of surrender was set upon and hewed in pieces by those madmen. After long and repeated assaults the city was finally taken, and men, women, and children promiscuously were slain in the streets and in their homes. The defenders then withdrew to the Temple, which seemed an impregnable rock impossible to be taken. But this, too, fell into the hands of the Romans and a soldier, seizing a brand, set fire to it and in an instant it was in flames. At this sight the few defenders who survived gave up the fight, threw away their arms, and uttering cries of despair leaped into the flames. In this war of extermination, not counting those who were slaughtered in the various cities and towns of Palestine, there perished in Jerusalem alone a million one hundred thousand Hebrews, ninety-seven thousand were taken and sold into slavery for a trifling sum, and the others were scattered over the earth, and for many years forbidden even to enter Jerusalem and weep over the ruins of the Temple. And we still see these hapless sons of Abraham roaming through all the regions of the globe, without temple or altar, having neither laws of their own nor a country, living in the midst of strange peoples but never coalescing with them, possessing colossal fortunes and full of talent, and withal shunned, suspected, abhorred, and ashamed of their very name. Was I

not right, then, in saying that the words of Christ, describing these events, as "*such as had not been seen from the beginning of the world until now, either shall be,*" were but the exact expression of historical truth?

"*And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved, but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened.*"

Here is a truth to which we should give serious thought. We learn from the words of Christ Himself that the stupendous catastrophe that came upon Jerusalem and the whole Jewish nation, was of shorter duration and therefore less disastrous than it might have been. And the historian Josephus Flavius expresses his amazement at the celerity with which the siege was brought to a successful close, since, considering the number and the desperate valor of the besieged, the strength of the place, and the preparations for defending it, a very prolonged resistance should have been anticipated. This rapidity in the military operations of the Romans shortened the sufferings and anguish of the besieged and saved the lives of about forty thousand Jews, who escaped the general slaughter. This particular fact, foretold by Christ, and which in a measure mitigates the horrors of that awful disaster, to whom is it to be ascribed? To the *elect,* "*for the sake of the elect.*" Their prayers, their merits, and their sufferings, made the lot of the ill-fated city less unendurable than it otherwise would have been.

My dearly beloved, how often in our very midst have the prayers and the penances, the reparations and the virtue, of numerous souls in town

and country, and in the peaceful solitudes of the cloister, placated the just wrath of God and saved us from merited chastisement? If ten just saved Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction, the many saintly souls who live among us should be able to save us from the chastisements of divine justice. The holy souls who live among us remind me of those lofty trees that we see in going through the country, which by reason of their height silently attract to themselves the electricity of the clouds during a storm and harmlessly convey to the earth the dangerous fluid. Those nations and parishes are to be blessed in which just souls are found, who noiselessly disarm the anger of Heaven.

Our Lord seems to say to His disciples: "What will you do in those days of unspeakable anguish and of supreme peril for your faith?[1] *Then if any one shall say to you: Lo here is Christ, or there; do not believe him, for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets.*" As you know, at the time of the birth of Christ, the coming of the Messias was universally expected, and naturally this ferment of anticipation lasted for nearly a century after His birth. Certain crafty and wicked agitators took advantage of this persuasion and claimed to be the Messias or the promised Christ. Some said that Herod was the Messias; others said that John Baptist was he; others, again, later on that he was Theudas, or Judas the

[1]Jesus was speaking to the apostles and disciples, many of whom must have been still alive during that time; but in the persons of the apostles and disciples His words were addressed to all believers who might be living during those fearful calamities, and who, as we know from history, profited by what He said.

Gaulonite, or Simon; and others that he was Barcochebas, the son of the star; and still others claimed that they were Christ or one of the prophets. They all inflamed the people, drove them to revolt, and were the principal cause of the disasters of the Jews. At times they led the people into the desert; again they concealed themselves, and coming forth from their hiding-place performed prodigies in confirmation of their mission. Jesus Christ had predicted that they would show signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Were these real miracles? Assuredly not. They were deceptions, frauds; possibly applications of natural forces known to them, and possibly wonderful phenomena, wrought by satanic intervention, as in the case of Simon Magus. And God could have permitted this, having in advance forewarned those likely to be deceived; and moreover it was not difficult to distinguish these impostures from true miracles by examining into the character of those who performed them, into their conduct and teachings, and into the way in which they were wrought. And thus it happened, by a just judgment of God, that this people, who refused to believe in the multitudinous and splendid miracles of Christ, believed in those wicked impostors, who led them on to destruction.

My friends, the solemn warning of Jesus Christ is useful and necessary even in our own age and in the midst of so many sowers of new doctrines. We have the teachings of faith and the Supreme Shepherd of the Church to guide us; we listen to him, we follow him alone and no other, and we

shut our ears to those teachers whose noisy voices deafen us, saying: Listen to us, follow us, we will teach you the truth. The truth is with Jesus Christ, and with His Vicar, who continues His work.

Thus far Jesus Christ has spoken of the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem; now He goes on to answer the second question put to Him by the apostles: *"What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" "As lightning,"* He says, *"cometh out of the east and appears even into the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be."*

Do not think that in those days of grief and terror the Saviour, or the Messias, will hide here or there, or in the desert; when He shall come the second time to judge the living and the dead, He will appear as lightning, illuminating every place, when men shall least expect Him; He shall be encompassed with majesty and glory, and before His infinite power every creature in heaven and on earth shall bow. "Do not," He seems to say, "confound My first coming with My second, for they are wholly different."[1]

When the Son of man shall come in that blind-

[1]Some may think that there is a contradiction in the words of Christ. In the Gospel are given the signs that will precede the destruction of the world; and then it is said that He will come as lightning, or as St. Paul puts it, as a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, or again, as a thief in the night. There is no contradiction and can be none; there are signs and the greatest of them is that given by Christ: "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations, *and then shall the consummation come.*" And He does not say that it shall take place at once or after a long time. Every one can see that the time must be long. It is said, then, that the second coming of Christ will be as lightning, in the twinkling of an eye, to point out that there will be no gradual and lingering manifestation of it.

ing light, what will happen? Here Jesus uses a figure common among the Orientals, but somewhat strange to us; still it should be borne in mind that He was addressing Orientals and that He adapted His language to their manner of speech. Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures and eagles come from all sides to eat of the carrion; so, says Christ, as soon as the Son of man shall appear in the heavens, the angels and the just will hasten to gather about Him, forming His crown and feasting upon the divine vision: *"We shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ."*

"And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved." And should the end of the world have come immediately after the catastrophe that came upon the Jewish nation? You will see at once that, if such were the case, not only would the fact have been contrary to the prediction, but there would have been a contradiction in the very words of Christ; because He foretold that the Gospel would be preached throughout the whole world before His coming, an impossibility in so brief a time; and because He declared that no one should know anything about that last day.[1] It would seem, then, that those words: *"And immediately after*

[1]Some think that by the words: "*Immediately after the tribulation of these days,*" Jesus wished to warn believers to be always prepared for His second coming, and that *as one day* is as a thousand years in God's sight, so also *immediately* may be understood as meaning a very long period of time. To me these men seem to be sophistical.

the tribulation of those days," are to be understood as referring on to something else, that is, after that frightful calamity, of which the fall of the Jewish nation is a sort of type or prophecy, will come the last and the greatest of all calamities, the end of the world.

You will notice, my friends, that the prophets in announcing some extraordinary event, such as the fall of Babylon, are accustomed to employ superlative and emphatic forms of expression, as for example, the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the heavens shall be moved, the earth shall tremble, and the like. Jesus, making His own the language of the prophets, very properly foretells the end of the world, using the same sublime and poetical expressions. We may take it for granted, then, that Jesus Christ in employing these phrases and terror-inspiring images meant only to convey in a general way the portentous and awful phenomena that would precede the last day, without specifying them more particularly. Certainly, that great day will be preceded and accompanied by unheard of physical convulsions of which we can form no idea; on this point the Sacred Writings are very clear. But the falling of the stars must not be taken literally; they are immeasurably larger than the earth and hence it is difficult to understand how they can fall on it. These expressions of the Sacred Text lead us to believe that there will be a general disorder on the earth and in the heavens and that this will be followed by the universal breaking up and renewal of all things.

"*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of*

man in heaven." What will this sign be? It has been said, and it is still said, that the sign of the Son of man will be the Sign of the Cross; this was the sign of His supreme humiliation and therefore it should be the sign of His glory, and it is natural to believe that it will be the standard of His final triumph. Still there is nothing against taking the word *sign* as indicating something of which we have no knowledge, some stupendous manifestation of the glory of Christ.

"*And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn* and beat their breasts," that is, all the wicked then living will know their sins and cry out in agony: "*Therefore, we have made a mistake*—we have gone along the paths that lead to error and perdition." And will they still be able to repair their mistakes, to repent, and be saved? To this question the Sacred Text says neither yes nor no.

"*And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.*" Think not, my dear friends, that the Saviour of the world, when He comes to do solemn and irrevocable justice to all, will need clouds, or light, or aught else, to give majesty to His Person; all this is said solely as an aid to our understanding, because we can comprehend only such thoughts as are presented to us under sensible figures, and therefore such images are necessary when we speak of God and of His internal acts, which are eminently spiritual.

"*And He will send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds and from the far-*

thest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds thereof.'' Here Jesus Christ manifestly speaks of the resurrection which will take place at the end of time, and we know that it will be brought about by God, who alone can give life, and who can give it again, but through the ministry of the angels. It may be said that whatever God does on earth He does through the angels, the ministers and executors of His will; and that as God makes use of their ministry in communicating with us men, so should we have recourse to God through their agency, as our natural mediators.

Our Lord speaks of trumpets and of a great voice by means of which the angels will gather the elect before Him. And are these material trumpets? And is the voice one that will send forth a sound like to that of the voice of man? I do not think so. They are most pure spirits, and how can they use material trumpets, or how can their cry be like that of the voice of man? The Jews were accustomed to cite before the tribunal of justice those who were to be judged by sound of trumpets and by the strong voice of the public crier. Jesus, in speaking of the last judgment, refers to trumpets and to the voice of the celestial criers, who will announce that it is at hand; but His language is not to be understood in a material sense, but in a sense applicable to the nature of angels. The angels, in a way conformable to their nature and strength, in the name and by the power of God, will call all men back to life, and from end to end of the earth and from the farthest bounds of the heavens will lead them into the presence of Christ, the Judge. Thus will close

forever the drama of this world and to every one will be given according to his works. A terrible day that, when we shall each hear the sentence, which during the passing of all the ages shall never be changed. May God grant that we may all, all without exception, be among the number of those elect whom the angels will gather together from the four winds, that is, from end to end of the heavens. Amen.[1]

[1]I will not comment on the last verses of this Gospel because they are identical with those of the Gospel of St. Luke (xxi. 29-34) which I have explained in the second homily of vol. i.

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